A whole-school approach to mentoring students: An Australian secondary school case study

by

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In a sense, this thesis has many authors. Although in most cases their work is unscripted, the inquiry would not have been possible without the encouragement and support of family, friends and colleagues over the course of my doctoral candidature.

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Last but not least I wish to recognise the outstanding technical guidance and expertise extended to me by Karen Coates. Now closer to the white line, it is fitting that her collegiality and generosity are shared as my final acknowledgement.

The text that follows represents a personal and professional triumph and confirms the belief that:

“It always seems impossible until it’s done” (Nelson Mandela, July 18, 2012).
DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my father Kenneth John Beecher (1925-2006), a man of great acumen, compassion and humility who constantly encouraged his children to dream, but to dream with their eyes wide open.
ABSTRACT

Both within and beyond the walls of the nation state there are unprecedented efforts to improve outcomes for all students within schooling contexts. These efforts are reflected in government policy, monitoring practices and in public statements that define what now constitutes the new ‘quality’ within the educational space. This in turn has been interpreted and mobilised in a variety of ways to promote learner empowerment and improvement. This study investigates the experiences of students and mentors in a school-based mentoring program delivered through a whole-school approach in an Australian Year 7-12 secondary school. The program, formally titled ‘The Learning Mentor Program’, was implemented to support and monitor the development of students as learners throughout their final 6 years of schooling. Unlike traditional school-based mentoring programs, mentoring is used intentionally in this extended interpretation of the practice as a promotion strategy for all students in preference to an intervention strategy for ‘at risk’ cohorts. In addition, in this program all teaching staff occupy mentor roles, as do those members of the non-teaching staff whose positions require frequent student contact. In summary, all mentors are employees of the research site. The research project adopted a single case study methodology as the strategy of inquiry and employed the data collection methods of semi-structured interviews, a focus group and online questionnaires, within an overall qualitative design. A total of 657 students across Years 7-12 and 58 Learning Mentors completed an online questionnaire. In addition to these respondents, 10 Learning Mentors participated in a semi-structured interview and 5 Year 11 students formed the single focus group for the project. In summary, 60% of the total student enrolment and 77% of the eligible Learning Mentor cohort participated in the research project. A thematic analytical approach was utilised in the study to examine all questionnaire data (both open-ended and closed response items) and the semi-structured interview and focus group transcripts. This method of analysis provided a systematic way of identifying and then coding the commonality of themes and patterns of experience presented by the respondents through these data collection techniques. The study also investigated whether experiences of the program differed for stakeholder sub-groups. For students, the sub-groups considered were gender and year level, whilst for mentors the three sub-groups explored were
years of experience, positionality within the learning community and whether the mentor occupied a teaching or non-teaching role. Since the investigator in this study was an employee of the research site up until the end of the data collection period, insider-outsider researcher status is noted as a feature of the research journey. The findings from the inquiry identify that a school organisational frame specifically designed to facilitate and promote program intent within a whole-school approach is fundamental to the initiative. In addition, the mixed year level composition of Learning Mentor Groups (the base unit of the frame) and weekly contact dosage also influences experience for students and mentors. The study also highlights that when developing content and activities for programs of this nature, those that have relevance to a student cohort(s) and directly support student learning is a requisite. Further significant findings the investigation unearths are that differences in experience of the program for students are influenced by stage of secondary schooling rather than gender, whilst for the mentor stakeholder group, the biggest differences in experience present between the teacher mentor and non-teacher mentor sub-groups. The key outcome from the program for both stakeholder groups is the building and sustaining of trusting mentor/student relationships within a caring, supportive and encouraging environment. The study presents particular implications for the design and resourcing of programs with similar intent and context.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

LPR    Learning Mentor Program
LCL    Learning Community Leader
LM     Learning Mentor
LMG    Learning Mentor Group
LMP    Learning Mentor Period

PRESENTATIONS

Ryan, A. (2014) ‘Mentoring Learners for Improved Outcomes in an Australian Secondary School’. Presentation of the methodology, methods and preliminary findings of doctoral research at the 2nd CAPEU (Consortium of Asia-Pacific Education Universities) Symposium, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI), Tanjung Malim, Malaysia; October 30 to November 1, 2014.
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

In this introductory chapter to the thesis, what positions this study is identified and discussed, and the research questions tabled. The significance of the inquiry is then presented and the research site and researcher introduced. The chapter concludes with an overview of the thesis.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

Both nationally and internationally there are unprecedented efforts to improve learning outcomes for all students. The development of the ‘human capital’ of a population through the schooling system is recognised more than ever as central to economic growth and prosperity (Productivity Commission 2013). This improvement focus manifests itself in different ways in different contexts. In Australia, efforts to improve outcomes for all students is evidenced through the development and ministerial endorsement of an Australian Curriculum, public statements of what now constitutes quality teaching and school leadership as detailed in the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (2011) and the Australian Professional Standard for Principals and the Leadership Profiles (2014), and an increased monitoring of school and school system performance through the National Assessment Program in Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) managed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). Across the globe, parallel activity to this nation state is in operation.

Responding to the Improvement Focus
Closer to the core of the learning activity, schools and affiliated organisations are necessarily responding to this focus in a variety of ways. This has included the realignment of school infrastructural frames to better support learning and collaboration, the implementation of specific learning skill development programs in addition to that defined by the rigidity of the curricula walls, and a closer look at and response to those school dimensions that promote learner disengagement and/or empowerment. Some educational settings, in determining their strategy for improvement, develop and implement programs for their context and need, with the identified intent and mechanism for the support reflected in their title. Examples of
such programs are Student Advisory Programs, Advocacy Models of Student Support and School-based Mentoring Programs. Whilst each of these program classifications is distinct, they are organised and implemented in a variety of ways to best meet the needs of the community or cohorts of learners they aim to serve. What is a constant across the three frames, however, is the promotion of student outcomes through cultures of connectedness, facilitated through the development of a relationship between student and a significant adult.

This thesis will focus on school-based mentoring programs because of the nature of the inquiry it supports.

**School-based Mentoring Programs**

School-based mentoring has increased dramatically over the last decade and particularly in the United States (Grossman, Chan, Schwartz & Rhodes 2012; Herrera, Grossman, Kauh & McMaken 2011; Randolph & Johnson 2008; Herrera Grossman, Kauh, Feldman & McMaken 2007). In traditional school-based mentoring programs, mentors who are mostly volunteers and therefore external to the school environment, are matched to a mentee identified by either the school or outside agency as in need of additional support. Mentoring occurs onsite and within the school day using the classical or one-to-one mentoring approach. The student cohort served by these specialised programs to date has been essentially confined to students *at risk*, with the *at risk* descriptor fitting a number of behaviours and circumstances. As expected, “prevention-focussed, risk and resilience frameworks” (Randolph & Johnson 2008, p. 177) guide the majority of such initiatives. The intended influence of these school-based mentoring programs has been to promote pro-social behaviours, enhance emotional wellbeing and improve student learning outcomes facilitated through the development of the mentor/mentee relationship. However, the research base to date is mixed in terms of program effects on these areas for the *at risk* cohort they currently serve (Dappen & Isernhagen 2006; Portwood, Kinnison, Waris & Wise 2005; Herrera 2004). This could be a function of the rigor of the research design employed (Bayer, Grossman & DuBois 2015) or of other factors such as context, program focus, mentoring approach, mentor source or age of mentee. A closer examination of the latter fields and of content, infrastructure and dosage (Karcher, Kupermine, Portwood, Sipe & Taylor 2006) in terms of their
influence on outcomes within mentoring initiatives, will add further insights into a research area that is gaining momentum.

Currently absent in the mentoring research space are formally documented studies of extended interpretations of school-based mentoring programs that include all students within the learning facility. One such extended interpretation is a whole-school approach where mentoring is used intentionally as a promotion strategy in preference to an intervention strategy, and where mentors are drawn only from the employee group of the learning facility. Portwood & Ayers (2005) note that outside of family, “teachers are the group most frequently identified as mentors by youth” (p. 336) and so it makes sense that schools are a natural context for mentoring programs of this nature.

This thesis aims to specifically explore the experiences of students and mentors as the key stakeholder groups in a school-based mentoring program delivered through a whole-school approach in a Year 7-12 Australian secondary school, to determine what factors are most influential in mentoring initiatives of this type and within this context for the stakeholder groups and sub-groups they aim to serve. At the research site, the program is formally titled The Learning Mentor Program and the mentoring is delivered through a combination of both group and classical (or one-to-one) approaches by all members of the teaching staff, and by those members of the non-teaching staff that occupy roles requiring significant daily student contact.

1.2 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The broad aim of this study, and therefore the overarching research question is:

*What factors influence the experience of participants in a school-based mentoring program delivered through a whole-school approach?*

Specific stakeholder sub-questions explored within this frame were:

1. Do experiences differ for students at different year levels?
2. Do experiences differ for male and female student cohorts?
3. Do experiences differ for teacher and non-teacher Learning Mentors?
4. Do experiences differ for teacher mentors occupying leadership roles to teacher mentors not in leadership roles?
5. Do experiences differ for teacher mentors with more than 10 years teaching experience to those with less than or equal to 10 years teaching experience?

By organising the research questions in this way, a better insight into those factors that most influence the achievement of outcomes within this context for all stakeholders were identified, along with those particular to a stakeholder group or sub-group cohort. The potential for this inquiry to inform other initiatives with similar context and intent is thus strengthened.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

This inquiry presents and investigates an extended interpretation of a school-based mentoring scheme. The study will contribute to the mentoring research space in the following ways:

1. By detailing one structure and approach to a school-based mentoring program that is inclusive of all students in a learning facility and assigns mentoring roles to all teachers as well as some non-teaching staff that occupy roles requiring significant daily student contact.

2. By mapping the experiences of the student stakeholder group in terms of program infrastructure and processes, relationship development and program impacts, to determine the existence of any similarities or differences in experience of the program across year level and gender groupings.

3. By mapping the experiences of the mentor stakeholder group in terms of program infrastructure and processes, mentor role, relationship development and program impacts, to determine whether a teaching or non-teaching background, positional status or years of teaching influence experience within the Program.

4. By highlighting those factors that most influence stakeholder(s) experience within school-based mentoring programs of this form and intent.

5. By uncovering areas for further investigation that would contribute new knowledge to the school-based mentoring research space.

The intent of this study was not to provide a whole-school mentoring model to replicate, as that is determined in many ways by the “context, structure and goals” (Karcher et al. 2006, p. 709) of each initiative; rather, the intent was to map the
experiences of the key stakeholders within one interpretation of a school-based mentoring program to further inform inclusive practices of this type and to stimulate innovative thinking around what can constitute ongoing learning support environments for adolescent cohorts, as they move toward their final phases of schooling.

1.4 AN INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH SITE AND TO THE RESEARCHER

The Research Site

The College is a denominational, co-educational, Year 7-12 Australian secondary school serving a large regional area within the state of Victoria. Whilst the charism of its once denominational authority remains central to the school’s ethos, governance from that body ceased in December 1984, commencing the era of lay principalship.

Prior to 2010, the College was a single campus learning facility. In 2010, an additional campus was added to the school’s learning and teaching infrastructure, and from that point on Year 7, Year 8 and the Senior School (Years 10, 11 and 12) classes were delivered on the original (or main) campus and Year 9 classes on an adjacent property. This was the same year The Learning Mentor Program was implemented.

At the time of commencement of data collection for the inquiry (toward the end of 2013), student enrolment figures sat at 1,104 students, requiring 75.0 full-time equivalent teaching staff and 40.2 full-time equivalent technical, administrative and support staff to service the school’s multiple agenda (The College Annual Personnel Budget, 2013). Current enrolment figures (2017) stand at 1,163 students.

Like many schools, this learning facility has experienced a number of significant structural changes over the last decade in terms of the learning delivery and management models employed in response to educational and political change agenda. Today the management framework aligns more with a distributed leadership model, connecting a system of interacting teams across a planar assembly. In terms of learning, an integrated curriculum utilising an inquiry-based interdisciplinary approach is delivered in Years 7 and 8, whilst Year 9 curriculum delivery has an
emphasis on project-based learning. In Years 10, 11 and 12 learning is discipline-based, with an emphasis on personalised programs.

*The Researcher*

The investigator in this study was an employee at the research site up until the end of the data collection period in early 2014, occupying a senior leadership role throughout the 16-year employment period. Prior to moving interstate to assume a position in an education system central office, the researcher simultaneously occupied the following three roles at the College:

(a) Learning and Teaching Leader: Senior School (Years 10, 11 and 12)
(b) Classroom Teacher *and*
(c) Learning Mentor

It also needs to be noted that the researcher was a member of the Project Team that led the development and implementation of *The Learning Mentor Program* (detailed in Chapter 3), the case of interest in this inquiry. Although the team varied in membership according to the phase and needs of the project, three employees remained central to the initiative from initiation of the concept in 2008 to delivery in 2010. The researcher was one of the three, along with the Deputy Principal (Student Development) and the Year 7 Student Development Leader. The Deputy Principal (Student Development) led the Project Team and the *Learning Mentor Program* in the College. Because of initial insider researcher status (explored further in Chapter 4: 4.1), the researcher did not contribute to any data gathering method employed in the study.

1.5 **OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS**

This thesis is organised into eight chapters. A brief summary of each of the remaining seven chapters follows:

**Chapter 2: Literature Review**

This chapter provides a critical appraisal of the *mentoring* literature that is relevant to the proposed inquiry, to enable the reader to see this field in its current state. The focus is on mentoring programs within educational contexts, and the cohorts they serve. Within the review, central themes and debates emerge, along with the “breaks and ruptures” (Franklin 1999, p. 350) and the silences. The review then locates the
proposed study relative to the existing research and identifies the ways in which the inquiry will contribute to and extend the current knowledge of school-based mentoring schemes.

**Chapter 3: The COLLEGE Learning Mentor Program**

This chapter backgrounds the development and staged implementation of a school-based mentoring program delivered through a whole-school approach in an Australian Year 7 to Year 12 secondary College, and in doing so provides a descriptor of the case under study. Within this contextual frame, the key infrastructural elements of the initiative, allocation protocols and the stakeholder preparation and feedback strategies employed to inform program development in its early stages are detailed.

**Chapter 4: Research Methodology and Design**

This chapter presents and justifies the philosophical assumptions and design strategies chosen to frame the inquiry. It commences with a descriptor of the intent of the study, followed by the identification and validation of the paradigmatic and methodological approaches employed, i.e. an illuminative case study within an interpretivist framework. Informant recruitment processes and the resulting participatory groups, ethical considerations and the data gathering and analysis techniques utilised are also mapped within the chapter. In addition, strategies employed to establish the trustworthiness of the case and problems encountered in producing data are presented. The acknowledgement and duration of insider researcher status is identified early in the text.

**Chapter 5: Research Findings: Students**

This chapter details student experience of a whole school approach to mentoring through a school-based Learning Mentor Program. It has three defined sections. The first section maps the findings from the closed response items of the administered anonymous online questionnaire through the following lenses: program infrastructure and processes, relationship development and program impact. The second section maps the findings from the thematic analysis of the open-ended response items from the same data-gathering instrument. The final section of the chapter reports findings from the student focus group. An identification of the major findings concludes the chapter.
Chapter 6: Research Findings: Learning Mentors

Chapter 6 is the second of two chapters detailing the research findings from the study. This chapter focuses on Learning Mentor experience of the mentoring program. Like the previous chapter, this chapter has three defined sections. The first section maps the findings from the closed-response items of the administered anonymous online questionnaire through the following four lenses: program infrastructure and processes, mentor role, relationship development and program impact. The second section maps the findings from the thematic analysis of the open-ended response items from the same data-gathering instrument and the final section of the chapter reports findings from the 10 semi-structured interviews. An identification of the major and minor findings completes the chapter.

Chapter 7: Key Findings

In this chapter of the thesis, the major findings emerging from the stakeholder data tabled in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 are mapped to the research questions. Within this frame, key factors influencing the mentoring experience for participatory cohorts are identified, as are differences of experience within identified sub-groups of the two participatory cohorts. A summation of the key findings closes the chapter.

Chapter 8: Discussion and Conclusion

In this final chapter of the thesis, the findings presented in Chapter 7 are discussed in relation to the research questions and to the overall research field of this initiative. In addition, key contributions to the field of school-based mentoring emerging from the inquiry are identified, as well as the limitations of the study and implications for further research. The thesis concludes with a closing comment and a final reflection from each of the two stakeholder groups.
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

A Literature Review is a “narrative essay that integrates, synthesizes and critiques the important thinking and research on a particular topic” (Merriam 2009, p. 75-76) by accredited scholars, and should “inform and underpin the whole of a research project” (Hitchcock & Hughes 1995, p. 91). And so the first aim of this review is to provide a critical appraisal of the body of literature on mentoring that is relevant to the proposed inquiry - an inter-textual web that allows the reader to see this field in its current state. In doing so central themes and debates will emerge, along with the “breaks and ruptures” (Franklin 1999, p. 350) and the silences. The second aim of the review is to then locate the study relative to existing research and identify the ways in which it will contribute to and extend the current knowledge of school-based mentoring practices.

This review has been organised into thematic areas so as to build the conversation systematically yet reflexively. The conversation begins with a brief look at the history of mentoring.

2.1 ON MENTORING

2.1.1 History of Mentoring

Mentoring for the purpose of developing competencies and promoting positive social behaviours well and truly predates contemporary educational and business contexts. The ancient mentoring relationship evidenced in Homer’s Odyssey between Mentor and Odysseus’ son Telemachas is often cited as the archetypal model from which subsequent mentoring frameworks, practices and programs have developed. It is important to note that in this historical relationship, Mentor’s responsibilities were not confined solely to the educative needs of his protégé but also to “the shaping of his character, the wisdom of his decisions and the clarity and steadfastness of his purpose” (Barondess 1995, p. 3). History also records that Socrates mentored Plato who in turn mentored Aristotle, and that Haydn mentored both Beethoven and Mozart. From more contemporary times, the late British actor Sir Lawrence Olivier is known to have been the mentor of Sir Anthony Hopkins, whilst Mahatma Gandhi
mentored both Dr. Martin Luther King (Jr.) and Nelson Mandela. Further recognised examples of mentoring include: fashion designer Christian Dior mentoring fellow haute couture designer Yves Saint Laurent, the late Steve Jobs (former Apple Inc. Chief Executive Officer) serving as mentor to Mark Zuckerberg (Facebook Chief Executive Officer), and celebrated author and poet the late Maya Angelou mentoring American talk show host, media proprietor, actress and philanthropist Oprah Winfrey. Therefore, whilst the roots of mentoring can be traced to Greek mythology, the reality is that “mentoring is no myth” (Ragins & Kram 2007, p. 4) and has been employed as a instrument of social learning “meeting the needs and mirroring the values of the time and place in which it occurs” (Baker & Maguire 2005, p. 15) for thousands of years. Bold new perspectives and orientations of the strategy continue to emerge across “disciplines, professions and continents” (Ragins & Kram 2007, p. 4), demanding viewing and analysis through alternative theoretical lenses.

2.1.2 Mentoring Defined: A Plethora of Definitions

There is limited definitional consensus within the literature with regards to the practice of mentoring and this absence of “one comprehensive yet functional definition” (Bogat & Rednar 1985, p. 851) has plagued research in the field (Crisp & Cruz 2009; Jacobi 1991; Merriam 1983) by “stymieing efforts to synthesize empirical findings into a coherent body of knowledge and to identify important unanswered questions” (Healy & Welchert 1990, p. 17). Roberts (2000) refers to what does exist as a definitional quagmire, with clarity only emerging when the essential and contingent attributes are identified across a plethora of contexts. Some consensus on an operational definition is clearly imperative in order to make meaning of what has been explored and to make way for what is to come.

One key understanding that appears to have held its own within and across traditional definitions of the practice regardless of contextual differences is that mentoring refers to a structured, trusting and supportive relationship between an older, more experienced adult or mentor, and an unrelated protégé or mentee (Ehrich, Hansford & Tennent 2004; Rhodes 2002; Ragins & Scandura 1999; Lyons, Scroggins & Rule 1990; Kram 1988; Merriam 1983). The assumption that the mentor must be necessarily older than the protégé/mentee is both narrow and problematic as it implies that age hierarchy is a definitive feature of this type of association, thereby
creating an asymmetrical growth relationship in which the protégé/mentee is the primary beneficiary. However there is growing recognition within the mentoring research that reciprocity is the conditio sine qua non of the practice, with benefits also accruing to the mentor not as a “serendipitous by-product”, but “as an integral constituent of the relationship” (Healy & Welchert 1990, p. 18). It is reciprocity that distinguishes mentoring from other support relationships such as supervising, counselling, tutoring and teaching. Another assumption implied by traditional definitions is that mentoring produces only positive outcomes; however, Ragins & Kram (2007) in their summation of contemporary mentoring literature report that “scholars now recognize that mentoring relationships exist on a continuum of quality that reflects a full range of positive and negative experiences, processes and outcomes” (p. 9).

What follows is an attempt at constructing an operational definition that embraces all facets of the phenomenon, is contextually flexible and potentially better positioned to serve the field in developing and promoting a coherent knowledge base from research endeavours:

Mentoring is a developmental and reciprocal learning partnership that shares knowledge, skills, expertise and perspective, fosters resilience, inspires growth, is reflective, and models best practice within a supportive emotional framework.

2.1.3 Mentoring Literature: The Current State of Play

The mentoring literature has had significant contributions from government and private sector organizations as well as from tertiary institutions, with a smaller representation to date by comparison from the schooling sector. In addition, the majority of youth mentoring studies emanate from community-based programs rather than school-based programs, even though school-based mentoring has experienced unprecedented growth over the last decade. Therefore, across the existing literature there is general consensus that additional outcomes research on school-based mentoring is needed in order to inform best practice and maximize benefits for all stakeholder groups, i.e. students/mentees, mentors and the learning facility.
Whilst there is a sizeable body of literature that documents the merits of mentoring in terms of its potential to transform individuals, organizations and communities, Baker and Maguire (2005, p. 27) also call for the “unintended adverse effects of mentoring relationships and programs” to become a routine inclusion in inquiries in order to objectively grow the practice.

Whilst much of the scholarly material accessed for this review originates from the United States, there are also solid contributions from the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada.

2.1.4 Differentiating between Formal and Informal Mentoring

Within the literature, mentoring relationships are routinely mapped across a continuum from the formal through to the informal. Significant differences exist between the two in their distal forms and these have been summarised in Table 2-1.

**Table 2-1: Formal and informal mentoring relationships: a comparison**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal Mentoring</th>
<th>Informal Mentoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The formal mentoring relationship:</td>
<td>The informal mentoring relationship:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is facilitated and physically supported by the organization</td>
<td>• Is created spontaneously or informally without any assistance from the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is recognized as mentoring and therefore there are expectations from the relationship</td>
<td>• May not be recognized as mentoring and therefore there are no expectations from the relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Has a finite duration</td>
<td>• Is not finite in duration and often long-lived</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Needs to be energized at regular intervals</td>
<td>• Is self-energizing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does not ensure trust and flexibility from the onset</td>
<td>• Is trusting, flexible and personalised from the outset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is expected to develop within a defined framework: meetings are set, communication methods defined etc.</td>
<td>• Has no defined framework. Once created, the mentoring relationship grows through need</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other Key Characteristics:
- The aims of the relationship are specific, goal focussed
- Possibility of win/win/win benefits for the mentor, mentee and for the organization
- Orientation sessions for both mentor and mentee are critical to the success of the program
- Provides an opportunity for mentoring to those who may not normally be mentored through informal channels.
- Evaluative measures are used to assess progress and achievement of goals

Other Key Characteristics:
- The aims of the relationship can be non-specific, non-existent or evolve as the relationship develops
- Possibility of win/win benefits for the mentor and the memtee
- Orientation sessions form no part of an informal mentoring arrangement
- Not accessible to all, as mentor/mentee match formed by chance with mutual respect and friendship often influencing the match.
- Minimal to no use of evaluative measures

Adapted from Wareing (2001)

Differences also occur within the forms in terms of focus, organization and outcomes. A notable similarity is that both depend on the development of a unique, significant and purposeful relationship for success, as well as on the capacity to exercise free choice. Carruthers (1992) and Little (1990), however, both question whether formally established mentoring relationships can in fact realistically achieve the latter as they are initiated by an external agency, which changes the dynamics from the onset.

Whether formal or informal, mentoring continues to occur in a variety of contexts for a variety of purposes and this diversity of form has been recognised as “both a strength and liability for the establishment of a well-defined research base on the effectiveness of mentoring” (Karcher et al. 2006, p. 710). There is also a noticeable difference in the number of inquiries into formal and informal mentoring found in the international research literature. This disparity, which favours the existence of formal over informal records, makes sense, since as Roberts (2000, p. 156) observes “the difficulty of researching informal mentoring relationships is finding them”.

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2.1.5 Formal Mentoring Programs

Formal mentoring programs are categorized according to the nature of their organizing body. Such bodies include, but are not exclusive to, schools, community agencies or service clubs, the business sector, higher education institutions (Guetzloe 1997) and religious groups. Randolph and Johnson (2008), Ehrich, Hansford & Tennent (2001) and Rhodes (2002) all insist that successful formal mentoring programs need to be anchored within a defined theoretical or conceptual framework, as this provides the base from which both program aims and component details are articulated and the target population is identified.

Carruthers (1992) argues that formal mentoring is favoured by organizations possibly because of their intrinsic need to prolongate their culture. Does this then assume that the needs of the protégé/mentee are secondary to the needs of the organization (Roberts 2000)? Is it possible within formal mentoring arrangements to have some kind of equity of outcome intention between the three key players of mentor, mentee and organization?

2.2 FORMAL MENTORING PROGRAMS AND THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

Formal mentoring programs for school-aged youth take on a variety of forms to achieve a variety of outcomes. MacCallum and Beltman (1999) in their review of the formal mentoring literature in this field observe that such programs or schemes identify themselves by either “implicitly or explicitly including mentoring as an element of the program” (p. 31) or by defining the key functions of a mentor/significant adult within the design brief. In addition, these authors note that such programs are either modifications of existing material from the national or international arena, or are specifically developed and facilitated by a learning facility or community-based organization to address a particular need/s of school-aged youth.

Whilst recognizing the contribution of community-based mentoring programs in improving social, emotional and academic outcomes for youths across many decades, this section of the dissertation will focus on school-based forms because of the nature of the inquiry. Although school-based programs are considered to be a
relatively new type of mentoring, they are experiencing greater growth in number, diversity and intent than their community-based counterparts (Herrera et al. 2011; Randolph & Johnson 2008; Karcher & Herrera 2007).

2.2.1 School-Based Mentoring Programs

School-based mentoring, or mentoring within the school context is conducted under the auspices of the school and takes place during or after school hours on site. Students generally enter the program on referral from their teachers or other significant adult from the school setting. Mentors are usually recruited from within the non-teaching staff, from older peer groups within the school or other learning facilities, or from volunteer members of both the professional and broader community where the school is located.

In the United States, about 70% of site-based youth mentoring programs are located in schools (Portwood et al. 2005). Within this context, it is recognised as the fastest-growing form of mentoring (Grossman et al. 2012), although the actual growth rate is unknown. Portwood and Ayers (2005) observe however that this growth has outpaced the research required to truly validate the form in terms of its effectiveness in maximising youth benefits. This is also recognised by Randolph and Johnson (2008), who call for an increase in the dissemination of findings of evaluative studies of school-based programs in order to improve and further define the practice.

There is some consensus that the increase in school-based programs particularly in the last decade has been due to:

1. School performance pressures and therefore the need to improve the learning outcomes of students (Herrera et al. 2007).
2. The nature of school settings. Schools are contained systems and therefore supervision of the mentor/student relationship is easily facilitated.
3. The fact that schools are where the youth are, therefore if programs are to serve this population it makes sense that they operate from that context.
4. The capacity of school-based programs to access a target population who may otherwise not be reached through community-based forms (Randolph & Johnson 2008) since the referee to the program is a member of the teaching staff or other significant adult within the learning facility. Dappen and Isernhagen (2005, p. 22) argue that “parents are frequently uninterested or unwilling to refer their child for
a mentoring program” and so in cases where this exists school-based forms are the better fit.

5. The fact that since referees of students to the programs are in situ, they are therefore potentially available for feedback to mentors and to the organization and for monitoring student performance in the classroom.

Within the literature, it is understood that school-based programs typically utilise mentoring as a strategy to remedy the problems of the at risk subgroup of school-aged youth. A risk-and-resilience perspective embedded within a prevention framework is therefore a defined feature of many of these programs. In more recent times, program organizers have revised their target group to also include gifted and/or talented students. Randolph and Johnson (2008) observe that school aged youths with serious needs are also often excluded from studies of the effectiveness of such programs, with the assumption being that “their needs require a more intense intervention than what school-based mentoring provides” (p. 183). What remains a constant is that in their relatively short lifetime, school-based mentoring programs have been selective, never intended for all members of the population since the majority of the youth cohort is excluded.

2.2.2 Early Forms of Mentoring Programs in Schools

It could be argued that the earliest forms of mentoring programs in schools were introduced in the late 19th century in the United States in the form of advisory programs that initially focussed on vocational and moral guidance (Myrick, Highland & Highland 1986). Emphasis changed during the 1920s and 1930s, with guidance and education forming an equal partnership in program emphasis. Education was considered “guidance for living” with the class teacher recognised as “being in the unique position to deliver guidance” (Galassi, Gullelde & Cox 1997, p. 304). In contemporary times, programs under a plethora of titles like Home Base, Teacher Advisor, Advocacy Programs, The Fourth R, and over 100 others continue to exist although form, emphasis and substance vary. They are essentially types of mentoring experiences involving teacher and student or teacher and groups of students but are generally not included as a subset of school-based forms. Future research opportunities lie in extended interpretations of school-based programs and practices where mentoring is the agent of the desired change. Programs that are all inclusive
are potentially quite powerful, since “teachers are the group most frequently identified as mentors by youth” (Portwood & Ayers 2005, p. 336). However, Bisland (2001) recognises that informal mentoring relationships between student and teacher tend to evolve in schools even in the absence of formal programs, and that this is possibly facilitated by proximity as well as what is generally understood to be the role of the teacher.

2.2.3 Types and Dimensions of Mentoring Programs in Schools

Philip and Hendry (1996) forward a typology of adult-youth mentoring based on the variations that can exist in the structure of the mentoring unit. They proffer that there are five possible mentoring styles:

(a) Classic One-to-one
(b) Individual-Team
(c) Friend-to-friend
(d) Peer Group
(e) Long-Term

The individual-team approach may take the form of group (youth mentees) to individual (adult mentor) or group (youth mentees) to small number of individuals (adult mentors). Lacey (1999) extends the typology to include mentoring hubs, where a mentor works with a group of mentees at the same time and on other occasions with each group member individually. Apart from mentoring styles determining the structure of a mentoring unit, the mentor’s background – i.e. whether the mentor has come from within the same institution as the mentee or from the wider community – also influences structure. In the majority of school-based mentoring programs to date, the classic one-to-one approach utilising an external mentor has been the preferred structural form, but the practice of group mentoring in school settings has increased (Herrera, Sipe, McClanahan, Arbreton & Pepper 2000). This is occurring despite “concerns that it represents only a watered-down version of traditional one-on-one mentoring and amid cautions about (its) potential negative effects” (Kupermine & Thomason 2014, p. 287). The mentoring research base would benefit from further studies into identifying under what conditions group infrastructures “contribute enriching experiences that promote (student) development” (Kupermine & Thomason 2014, p. 287), as well as considering when a single or combined
method approach (i.e. employment of both one-to-one and group mentoring) would best influence positive outcomes for students within such contexts.

There is the potential for adult-youth mentoring programs to operate successfully within individual schools or groups of schools or across an educational system or systems. Whilst to date much of the literature emanates from the United States on school-based mentoring programs, there have been and continue to be contributions to the field from Australia. MacCallam and Beltman’s (1999) research in the late 1990s explored approaches to mentoring students in school settings, and through this work identified a diverse set of successful mentoring models operating within Australian schooling contexts. The case studies presented, whilst sharing a similar base context, differed in organisational structure, activity foci, mentor source and the student groups they targeted.

An example of one such program identified in this research and continuing to operate is the Learning Assistance Program (LAP). This program is school-organised, recruits volunteer mentors from the community, utilises the classic one-to-one mentoring approach and brings together student, mentor and teaching staff as partners and organizers in student learning. Currently 49 schools in Australia are registered program users and members of the LAP Association, with 42 of those schools located in South Australia (Kirkham 2017). Mentor/mentee contact is on a weekly basis on site, generally for 6 to 12 months, although some partnerships are known to have continued over a number of years. Whilst there exists a comprehensive guide on how to establish and operate the program, it can be adapted to suit any learning context, while still honouring the founding principles. Whilst students with learning needs are essentially the target group, the program is not designed to be exclusive, but rather to respond the needs presenting from each individual. The program was initiated in 1976 to deliver a more coordinated and proficient parent-based and seniors volunteer program to schools, and it continues to gain operational momentum in 2017.

Another program identified in the study, although no longer in operation, is the Science and Technology Awareness Raising (STAR) Program. The initiative, established in 1994, developed a learning partnership between BP Australia, Murdoch University and West Australian schools. It is recognized as the first cross-age and cross-institutional program of its type operating in the country. The target
student group were secondary science students with the mentoring provided weekly in either the one-to-one or small group format by university students, on site or via email. The aims of the program were to raise the aspirations of students in the fields of science and technology as well as to develop the communication skills of the university mentors. This is an example of a school-university partnership that involved multiple school sites in both regional and rural locations.

The Australian Youth Mentoring Network (AYMN) website (2017) also evidences the breadth of school-based mentoring programs currently in operation across the nation. To illustrate program variety, a snapshot of activity is presented in Table 2-2. This is informed by AYMN and also data provided through the Victorian Youth Mentoring Alliance (VYMA) website (2013) before ceasing operations in 2014.

What is common to both the MacCallum and Beltman (1999) study and the AYMN and VYMA compilations is that each exemplar program identified has a defined audience, involves a discrete subset of a school population, and does not utilise teaching staff in the mentor roles. In addition, the preferred mentoring approach employed in the majority of programs is classical or one-to-one.
Table 2-2: A Snapshot of the Variety of Australian School-Based Mentoring Programs Operating in 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Title</th>
<th>Program Location</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Student Age</th>
<th>Program Focus</th>
<th>Session Location</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plan-It Youth Programs</td>
<td>Various (mostly NSW)</td>
<td>One-to-one/Group</td>
<td>14-18 years</td>
<td>Transition to work and careers</td>
<td>School grounds</td>
<td>3-12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Assistance Program (LAP)</td>
<td>Suburban, rural and remote SA; WA; NSW;</td>
<td>One-to-one</td>
<td>5-18 years</td>
<td>Social and emotional wellbeing and academic development</td>
<td>School grounds</td>
<td>6-12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBS of Australia BIG Futures In-School Mentoring Program</td>
<td>Melbourne (VIC)</td>
<td>One-to-one</td>
<td>10-17 years</td>
<td>Build trusting relationships to support students develop positive future pathways</td>
<td>School grounds</td>
<td>12 months (during school term)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAISE: In School Mentoring Opportunity</td>
<td>Sydney/Newcastle (NSW); Melbourne (VIC); Brisbane (QLD);</td>
<td>One-to-one</td>
<td>13-16 years</td>
<td>Provision of a positive role model</td>
<td>School grounds</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The School Volunteer Program</td>
<td>Various in WA</td>
<td>One-to-one</td>
<td>5-17 years</td>
<td>Education, life skills</td>
<td>School grounds</td>
<td>12-18 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kids Hope AUS</td>
<td>Burwood East (VIC)</td>
<td>One-to-one</td>
<td>Less than 12 years</td>
<td>Social and emotional wellbeing and academic development</td>
<td>School grounds</td>
<td>18-24 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GR8 Mates School Based Mentor Program</td>
<td>Penrith (NSW)</td>
<td>One-to-one</td>
<td>14-15 years</td>
<td>Education, life transitions, transition to work, careers</td>
<td>School grounds</td>
<td>6-12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standing Tall School–Based Mentoring Program</td>
<td>Hamilton (VIC)</td>
<td>One-to-one</td>
<td>10-17 years</td>
<td>At risk of leaving school early, not reaching potential</td>
<td>School grounds</td>
<td>12-18 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenwood High School Mentoring</td>
<td>Glenwood (NSW)</td>
<td>One-to-one</td>
<td>15-17 years</td>
<td>Career, leadership and personal goals</td>
<td>School grounds</td>
<td>10 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Mentor Assisted Pathways (YMAP)</td>
<td>Melbourne (VIC)</td>
<td>One-to-one</td>
<td>13-18 years</td>
<td>Life transitions, transition to work, careers</td>
<td>School grounds</td>
<td>3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Youth Mentoring Program</td>
<td>Hervey Bay (QLD)</td>
<td>One-to-one/Group</td>
<td>7-17 years</td>
<td>Education, training, employment, physical, social and emotional development</td>
<td>School grounds/ community locations</td>
<td>6-12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Smith Family Learning for Life Mentor Program</td>
<td>Dubbo (NSW)</td>
<td>One-to-one</td>
<td>5-15 years</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>School grounds</td>
<td>3-6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.C.A.M.P School-Based Mentoring Program</td>
<td>Apollo Bay (VIC)</td>
<td>One-to-one</td>
<td>13-15 years</td>
<td>Support to develop skills to plan and implement a quality school theatre production</td>
<td>School grounds</td>
<td>3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kids Hope AUS – Indigenous Mentoring Program</td>
<td>Scoresby (VIC)</td>
<td>One-to-one</td>
<td>5-12 years</td>
<td>Social and emotional wellbeing and academic development</td>
<td>School grounds</td>
<td>12-18 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Australian Youth Mentoring Network (2017) and Victorian Youth Mentoring Alliance (2013) websites
2.2.4 Developing a Mentoring Program

To support mentoring program development there exist comprehensive checklists as well as “clearly stipulated standards and benchmarks for program implementation” (Komosa-Hawkins 2010, p. 124). Examples of such support are found in the following documents: AYMN ‘Australian Youth Mentoring Benchmarks’ (2012), MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership ‘Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring’ documents: Edition 4 (2015) and Edition 3 (2009); and the New South Wales Department of Education and Training ‘Guidelines for Mentoring and Supporting Students’ (2005). In addition, detailed case studies of successful programs are found in both the national and international literature. However, whilst program guidelines and case study findings allow for some transferability into new contexts, this has been essentially confined to structure and/or process rather than principles or concepts to grow a program. Evans, Jory & Dawson (2005, p. 411) caution program developers to avoid “importing programs uncritically” or partially as this limits the degree to which “unique local needs” can be met. In addition, to foster a sense of ownership and therefore the need for commitment there is general consensus that all stakeholders should be invited to co-author the goals and structural form of the program.

Whilst the majority of school-based mentoring programs are currently developed to serve a subset of a student population, Lauland (1998) recommends they still need to enjoy the same promotional status as other programs on offer within a learning facility and this should extend to the naming of the initiative. Program names that do not describe a particular population within a community are recommended.

Best Practice Features

The meta-analyses conducted by DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn & Valentine (2011) and DuBois, Holloway, Valentine & Cooper (2002) identify a range of best practice features of effective mentoring programs. Included are the elements of organisational infrastructure and resourcing, contact dosage, duration of relationship, formal parental involvement, structured activities (related to the aims of the program), targeted outcomes, mentor/mentee matching and mentor screening as well as mentor role expectations, support, monitoring and ongoing training.
Duration of Relationship

Studies by DuBois et al. (2011), Grossman et al. (2012), Grossman & Rhodes (2002), Herrera (2004) and Herrera et al. (2007) indicate that the longer the length of a mentoring relationship, the greater the potential to realise positive outcomes. More specifically, the inquiries concluded that relationships that lasted twelve months or longer recorded improvements in academic and behavioural areas with progressively fewer positive outcomes emerging from mentoring relationships ceasing after six months. Prematurely terminated relationships (between zero and three months) resulted in decrements in a number of areas but in particular in self-concept of the mentored. In addition, where re-matching occurred post this termination, the individuals showed negative impacts (Grossman et al. 2012).

Mentor Training

Sipe (2002) in her review of youth mentoring research from the mid-1980s to the late 1990s concludes that “providing mentors with support in their efforts to build trust and develop a positive relationship with youth” (p. 255) is a trait of successful programs and that it should occur pre-implementation and continue as professional learning throughout the duration of the mentoring relationship. Herrera et al. (2000) in their review of 722 youth mentoring studies confirm that pre-match mentor training equal to or greater than 6 hours fosters closer relationships than those that receive less, and the disparity is greater where training is less than 2 hours. What is to be determined however are the elements of a robust training program. Whilst there is general acceptance the latter needs to include effective mentoring practices, a hierarchy of essential topics is yet to be defined. Currently, program developers tend to select topics based on intuition and experience rather than being directed by a best practice guide. Training/preparation can also assist mentors to present with realistic expectations as well as creating an awareness of the differences that could be encountered between mentors and those to be mentored, and pathways to bridge perceived differences.

Matching Mentors with those to be Mentored

There is no generally recognized best-practice method utilized by program developers to match mentors with those to be mentored. Pryce, Kelly & Guidone
(2014) note that to date, matching practices tend to adhere to one of the following four models:

(a) The administrator-assigned model where a mentor is assigned to a mentee. This matching can be informed by a commonality of demographics, attitudes and interests.

(b) The choice-based or youth-initiated model where both the mentor and mentee have some input with regards to partner choice.

(c) An assessment-based matching model where an assessment tool (e.g. Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) is used to gather information on multiple aspects of the mentor and mentee to enable a match-based on complementarity.

(d) Program-initiated ‘meet-n-greets’ model’ (Karcher 2007) that enables potential mentors and mentees to meet informally and engage in activities that will “bring out the individuals’ traits and preferences” (Pryce et al. 2014, p. 434).

Whilst mentee/mentor match influences the relationship effectiveness of the dyad and therefore potential outcomes, there is recognition that further research into the effectiveness of matching approaches would extend the current knowledge base in this area.

**Resourcing**

An additional element identified by Jucovy (2000) as critical to both the development and maintenance of school-based mentoring programs is institutional support in the form of a ‘buy-in at the highest level of school leadership’ (p. 19). It is recommended that the buy-in translate to a deployment of adequate and appropriate resources (both human and fiscal) as well as a commitment to obtaining empirically sound evaluation data to measure both program outcomes and program impact and therefore effectiveness.

**Program Design**

There is general consensus across program development mentoring literature that pre-program planning, implementation and evaluation must necessarily constitute the three baseline phases of a program design brief if weaknesses are to be minimised and successes maximised (Bein 1999; Guetzloe 1997; Lauland 1998), and that these
actions are in accord with the “principles and recommended stages of research-driven frameworks” (DuBois & Silverthorn 2005b, p. 47). Whilst these phases are detailed in varying formats, the critical components identified by program developers and researchers in the field (including Australian Youth Mentoring Network 2012; Herrera 1999; MacCallum & Beltman 1999; Weinberger 2005) remain constant and are identified as:

1. Pre-Program Planning

   (a) Develop Needs Analysis – demonstrate a need for the program through a well-defined statement of purpose

   (b) Complete Literature Search – based on the needs analysis a search of best-practice mentoring models for the targeted population

   (c) Establish Program Parameters

      ▪ Program focus
      ▪ Program structure and content
      ▪ Target population
      ▪ Mentor source
      ▪ Site selection
      ▪ Dosage of mentoring activity
      ▪ Mentoring approach (classical, group etc)
      ▪ Stakeholder preparation plan
      ▪ Training of mentors
      ▪ Anticipated outcomes for stakeholders
      ▪ Monitoring structures
      ▪ Program promotion

   (d) Plan Evaluation Processes

      ▪ Determine desired outcomes
      ▪ Construct an evaluation design
      ▪ Determine the nature of the data to be gathered, data gathering methods and data sources
      ▪ Decide how to report findings
      ▪ Plan method of implementing recommendations and findings
(e) Plan Program Management

- Articulate management infrastructure and the policies and procedures to guide the structure
- Develop recruitment strategies where required as well as position descriptions and selection criteria
- Develop policies and practices to guide the program
- Establish program costs in terms of time, human and material resources required and identify a secure funding stream
- Map ongoing training and professional learning experiences for mentors and program leaders

(f) Implementation

- Officially launch program
- Maintain regular contact with mentors and mentees through the management structure as a means of ongoing support, supervision and monitoring
- Monitor progress of program activities
- Renew program activities as required
- Encourage ongoing parental involvement
- Continuously recognise the contributions from all program participants
- Where dyad duration is finite, celebrate achievements and establish closure

(g) Evaluation

- Gather, collate and analyse data
- Report findings to all relevant stakeholders
- Determine program impact
- Implement evaluation findings
- Commit to ongoing evaluation

Throughout the literature there are also comments identifying factors that can potentially diminish the success of mentoring programs. For example, Grossman and Rhodes (2002) in their review of the evidence observe that mentoring relationships of short duration (defined as less than 6 months) have the potential to be more of a hindrance than a help to the mentee. However much of this type of data accumulated
to date has focussed on the dynamics of the relationship between the mentor and the mentee in preference to any structural or content concerns. Eby, McManus, Simon & Russell (2000) in their study identified mismatch or social distance, lack of expertise, general dysfunctionality and distancing and manipulative behaviours of mentors as being the critical weakening agents of relationships as perceived by mentees, which in turn influence program impact. Grossman and Garry (1997) add the additional barrier of time constraints whereas Sipe (1996) tables the unusual yet seemingly detrimental influence of high expectations of the mentor/mentee dyad by both parties. It is to be noted that mismatch can occur either between the values of the participatory pairs or between the aims of the program itself and the perceived needs of the mentor and/or mentee. Ragins and Kram (2007) summarise relational constraints as follows:

“The range and degree of functions provided by a mentor may be driven by the needs of the protégé, the mentor’s ability to meet those needs (i.e. their interpersonal skills, resources, and power) the mentor’s needs, the ‘chemistry’ in the relationship and the organisational context” (p. 6).

2.2.5 Benefits of a School-Based Mentoring Model

Since school-based mentoring programs to date have been developed for essentially the at risk student population – with the at risk descriptor fitting a number of behaviours – the literature records a range of positive outcomes that have resulted from the implementation of such schemes. It is to be noted that benefits have not been confined to the mentored.

For the Mentored

In their meta-analysis of 55 evaluations of youth mentoring schemes, DuBois et al. (2002) identified attitudinal/behavioural, academic/educational, career/employment, social, and emotional and psychological as the five types of outcome measures that are possible from implementation of such initiatives. Whilst their overall findings provide general support for mentoring programs, effect size across all categories was “modest in terms of absolute magnitude” (p. 187), particularly in the social, emotional and psychological domains. In addition they reported that “youth from backgrounds of environmental risk and disadvantage” (p. 157) appear to be the major...
beneficiaries. Studies included in the meta-analysis however were not confined to school-based studies; they adhered to the classical or one-to-one mentoring approach, involved a counterfactual state, recruited non-mental health professionals as mentors and considered student cohorts where the mean age was less than 19.

Randolph and Johnson’s (2008) review of the mentoring literature on the other hand was confined only to studies that “reflected the prevailing conceptualisations of school-based mentoring” (p. 178), i.e. where mentoring occurred on the school site and only during the academic year, adhered to the classical approach and recruited volunteer mentors that were, again, not mental health workers. Thirty-nine articles and reports were eligible for review based on the set qualifying criteria. It is to be noted that “descriptive studies or process reviews” (p. 178) were not included. The review summarised the intents of the programs selected for analysis and the primary benefits resulting from participation. They concluded that the majority of studies examined the effect of mentoring on attitudinal and behavioural outcomes in preference to academic performance, and that where the latter existed there were mixed findings. The primary benefits from the former studies were reported to be increased connectedness to school, family and the community, with quality and duration of the dyad significant influences.

For the Mentor

There has been little work to date on identifying the benefits accrued for mentors as a result of participating in youth mentoring schemes. Ehrich et al. (2004) in their analysis of education-focussed studies noted that of the studies reviewed that reported some positive outcome associated with mentoring, less than half identified benefits for the mentor. It was recognized that this was not an indicator of lack of outcome but rather reflecting the fact that fewer studies sought mentor opinions. The four positive outcomes that were identified across the studies were “collegiality and networking, … reflection or reappraisal of beliefs, practices, ideas and/or values, … professional learning … and … personal satisfaction, reward or growth” (Ehrich et al. 2004, p. 8-9). MacCallum and Beltman’s (1999) cross-case analysis of a range of Australian youth mentoring programs across school and community settings also adds the following to the mix:
(a) Increased personal confidence
(b) Skill development in areas such as computer use and anger management processes
(c) Sense of satisfaction and altruistic value in contributing to the growth of the next generation
(d) Confidence as transmitters of knowledge
(e) General enjoyment from being in the role

Further studies into the benefits of mentoring for the mentor specifically in school-based settings will give greater insight into the dynamics of the phenomenon within such contexts, and move this component of the knowledge base beyond its current status.

For the Organization

The employment of school-based youth mentoring programs can also offer a number of benefits for the organization. Whilst the literature is currently not saturated with such data, there is some transferability of findings from the business sector to schools. Mentoring programs in general have the capacity to support the transmission of the expectations and cultural demands of an organization, and this is particularly relevant to the school-based forms. In addition, school-based schemes necessarily increase internal and external communication networks, thus facilitating an expansion of ideas and increased innovatory practices. When targeted student groups are purposefully and successfully mentored within schooling contexts, the “delivery of the products and services” (Schulz 1995, p. 62) within the classrooms often becomes less interrupted and productivity increases. And finally, school-based forms reinforce that learning is integral to all activities; it decreases the investment in outside agency support and influences capacity building.

2.2.6 Identifying Gaps

Randolph and Johnson (2008) observe in their review of the evaluative research into school-based mentoring programs that while every study they included “identified teachers and other school staff as important stakeholders” (p. 183), engaging this group did not register on the best practice list of program components listed by DuBois et al. (2002). In addition, they argue that further work needs to be done on
dosage or frequency and duration of contact between mentor and mentee and how this influences outcomes, so that future school-based mentoring programs maximise limited resources. Portwood and Ayers (2005) also agree that dosage data (amount, intensity and duration) constitutes an essential variable and therefore needs to be recorded, not only for program development purposes, but also for what it can contribute to the broader conversations in the field of evaluative research. To date, such data has not been maintained by many learning facilities and this may be due to the variation in mentor/mentee contact hours within a school across a target group, privacy/confidentiality issues, or the nature of the program itself and the levels of surveillance attached.

Another notable weakness in the literature are studies that identify those school traits that would best support the implementation and operation of successful school-based mentoring programs (Portwood & Ayers 2005). School culture and attitudinal factors, structural organization and policies as well as leadership dynamics and the capacity to flex with changing agendas may independently or collectively have some influence on program success and resilience.

The absence of control or comparison groups has been a common critique of the methodology of much research in this field (Grossman 2005; Little 1990; Philip & Hendry 1996) since the establishment of the behaviours of a counterfactual state is seen to be a critical comparative mass in ascertaining a program’s effectiveness. Another rarity in the literature to date are structured studies that focus on observing mentors mentoring. There is potential here to not only consider the influence of feedback on promoting outcomes but also the development and sustaining of reciprocity and how that influences the depth of the relationship and contributes to positive sustainable behaviours. Longitudinal investigations in the field are also another underrepresented area, and this may reflect the difficulty of maintaining coherence within studies when students relocate, mentors change, or programs alter (either to accommodate the removal or addition of components, or to adjust focus). Under these conditions longitudinal projects are possibly not the best fit for inquiries of this nature and may explain their scarcity.

The area however that continues to draw ongoing comment across many literature reviews of mentoring programs is around the use of measures to formally evaluate program impacts and program processes. DuBois et al.’s (2002) meta-analysis of the
effectiveness of youth mentoring programs found that positive impacts on youth outcomes were greater where program design included both monitoring and evaluative processes.

Perhaps the inclusion of some form of testing regime needs to be demanded from any study within the mentoring field in order for the research piece to claim and maintain credibility in terms of the promotion of outcomes. This would then avoid reliance on what Bein (1999) describes as “impressionistic and anecdotal evidence to support claims of effectiveness” (p. 121).

### 2.2.7 Evaluation of Formal Mentoring Programs

Grossman (2005) advises evaluators of formal mentoring programs “to be sure the program is delivering its services at a quality and intensity that would lead one to expect impacts” (p. 252) before commencing any evaluative procedures. In addition, she cautions evaluators to select program outcomes that are “integrally linked to the program’s theory of change that set multiple effectiveness bars, are gauged with sensitive measures, and can be achieved within the evaluation’s time frame and in the context of the program’s implementation” (p. 254). Karcher et al. (2006) acknowledge that if the latter were accepted as routine procedure, then youth mentoring literature would be strengthened since program impacts would have greater reliability. In addition, Randolph and Johnson (2008) advise that another area for development within evaluative frames are the inclusion of practices peculiar to a program, e.g. parental involvement, and how they influence results. This would broaden the scope of an evaluation and give a better insight into what constitutes the critical and associated drivers of program success.

However, DuBois (2014) cautions that “evaluating a youth mentoring program brings with it a set of additional requirements and challenges that are not typically encountered in evaluations of other types of programs” and results in the process being “an inherently complex, multifaceted and technically demanding undertaking” (p. 496).
Difference between an Outcome and an Impact

For evaluative purposes, Rossi, Freeman and Lipsey (1999) define an outcome as the value a particular variable holds post-implementation of an intervention, and an impact as the difference observed between the outcome and what it would have been pre-implementation of the intervention.

2.3 ON CHANGE IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

The introduction of any innovation in a learning environment constitutes change, and this has the capacity to “set off a chain of repercussions throughout a learning milieu … (producing) … unintended consequences that are likely to affect the innovation itself, changing its form and moderating its impact” (Parlett & Hamilton 1972 p. 5). Therefore change needs to be understood, with this understanding reflected within program development, implementation and evaluation phases of an innovation.

2.3.1 Types of Change

Change is categorized across the literature in a number of ways. Ackerman (1997) specifically distinguishes between developmental, transitional and transformational change, therefore describing the extent of the influence, whereas others classify according to the origin of the influence as conveyed by terms such as organic (bottom-up) or driven (top-down) change. In this study, the origin of the influence will be the basis of classification, with the change being a driven condition in one sense but also exhibiting some traits of the organic.

2.3.2 Productive Change and Schools

There is consensus within the educational research literature that change within the schooling sector is growing to be inevitable, constant and a fact of post-modern life. Pascale (1990) proffers that productive change within such settings should roam somewhere between over-control and chaos, therefore not fixed, and this implies a non-linear format “loaded with uncertainty” (Fullan 1997 p. 31) and thus unknowable (Stacey 1992) from the onset. There is an implied and anticipated emergent element embedded within this understanding. Schön (1971) argues that any authentic change necessitates “passing through the zones of uncertainty’, and in doing so ‘confronting more information than you can handle” (p. 12). Marris (1986)
adds another dimension to this observation insisting that in addition, all real change involves loss, anxiety and struggle, that this is natural and inevitable, and needs to be recognized.

In observing the process of change holistically, Fullan (1997) contends that a key indicator of the minimal effect size of a change in schools is “absence of problems” (p. 33). On the other hand, an indicator of impact in these settings is when the change/innovation is subsumed into the teaching and learning fabric of a school, i.e. “disseminated and maintained in the classrooms” (Basch 1984 p. 57) and therefore “ceasing to be an abstract concept or plan” (Parlett & Hamilton 1972, p. 21).

2.3.3 Cautions on Amount of Change

Fullan (2001b) contends that it is not the absence of innovative practices and programs in schools that is currently presenting as being problematic, but rather “the presence of too many disconnected, episodic, fragmented, superficially adorned projects” (p. 21), a condition he refers to as projectitis. Bryk, Sebring, Kerbow, Rollow and Easton (1998) referred earlier to a similar condition as the Christmas Tree Problem, arguing that often little, no or ineffectual change results from the implementation of the innovations. Hatch (2000) however isolates the measurable outcome of staff exhaustion (of both strength and spirit) from such activity and the collision of disconnected and incompatible practices. Recognizing the rationality in innovating does not always accompany the action pursued. The challenge for learning facilities is to navigate a sound pathway through the miasma of currently tabled innovations, to be both selective and discerning and to insist on a program coherence that facilitates a deep and shared meaning powered through skills, creative thinking and committed action (McLaughlan 1990). However, Marris (1986) does caution that often despite such endeavours “the meaning of change will rarely be clear at the outset, and ambivalence will pervade the transition” (p. 31). It could be argued that ambivalence like resistance can be interpreted as form of feedback and a measure of where the process is along the continuum of implementation. In fact, Maurer’s (1996) reminder that resistance to change gives valuable data and should not be ignored is evidenced in the following text:
“Often those who resist (change) have something important to tell us. .... people resist for what they view as good reasons. They may see alternatives we never dreamed of. They may understand problems about the finer details of implementation that we never see from our lofty perch atop Mount Olympus” (p. 49).

2.3.4 Change and Cultural Influences

When seeking to effect and sustain successful change of any form within an organization, the change theorists emphasise is the importance of understanding and working with the existing culture of the institution. Culture is often generically defined as the sum of the explicit and tacit levels of operation within a system and provides the context for work life. More explicitly it is:

“The total of an organization's past and current assumptions, experiences, philosophy, and values …. and is expressed in its self-image, inner workings, interactions with the outside world, and future expectations. It is based on shared attitudes, beliefs, customs, expressed or implied contracts, and written and unwritten rules that the organization develops over time and that have worked well enough to be considered valid". (Business Dictionary 2011).

Knowing, working with it and appreciating the change territory is particularly central to implementing and growing any innovatory practice within the schooling sector. To go against the predominant culture can automatically create obstacles and distinct lines of resistance.

2.3.5 Implementing Change

Fullan (2001a) observes that all successful schools encounter implementation dips as they more forward with innovation or change. He defines the dip as being “literally a dip in performance and confidence as one encounters an innovation that requires new skills and new understandings” (p. 40) and proffers that teachers experience the following two kinds of problems when immersed in the dip:

1. The social-psychological fear of change, a neophobia, where change is resisted despite its logical advantages
2. The lack of technical know how or skills to make the change work

This contributes to the stance that change needs to be understood and appropriately accommodated within the program design of any innovative venture within schooling contexts.

2.4 LOCATING THE PROPOSED INQUIRY RELATIVE TO THE EXISTING RESEARCH

The proposed inquiry considers the case study of a school-based mentoring program delivered through a whole-school approach in a Year 7 to Year 12 Australian co-educational secondary college. The initiative, called the Learning Mentor Program, was implemented to support and monitor students’ development as learners throughout the duration of their secondary schooling. This study specifically explores the experiences of the two key stakeholder groups within the Program, i.e. students as mentees and the mentors, to determine what factors most influence their experience.

Key features of the Learning Mentor Program include:

(a) Mentor Recruitment: All teaching staff occupy mentor roles as do 14 non-teaching staff drawn from College’s library, careers, technical, welfare and learning support staff. There are no mentors engaged in the program from groups or agencies external to the learning facility.

(b) Targeted Student Group: All students from Years 7-12 are enrolled in the program and therefore constitute the target group. This is an inclusive approach to mentoring within a schooling context, unlike traditional approaches that essentially target at risk cohorts with the at risk descriptor fitting a number of behaviours and circumstances.

(c) Mentoring Approach: Group mentoring is employed in the program, however inside that approach one-to-one mentoring occurs as frequently as the need arises. It could be argued that Lacey’s (1999) mentoring hubs best describes the approach utilised in the initiative.

(d) Dosage: Mentoring occurs daily during the 8-minute morning contact session as well as during the weekly (1 x 72) minute Learning Mentor period. This dosage is formally timetabled into the teaching and learning cycle of every
student, into the teaching load of all teacher mentors, and into the work hours of all non-teacher mentors. Mentoring can also occur informally throughout the course of each school day facilitated by the nature of schooling contexts. Annual scheduled mentoring time equates to \(((5 \times 8 \text{ minutes}) + 72 \text{ minutes})\) per week \(\times 40\) weeks of the school year = 4480 minutes = approximately 74.7 hours.

(e) Duration of Relationships: All students are assigned to a Learning Mentor Group and to a mentor (referred to as a Learning Mentor) for the duration of their secondary schooling, which is generally 6 years, assuming the student and the mentor remain at the College.

(f) Parent/Guardian Involvement: The Learning Mentor is the first point of call for the parent/guardian of a student. In addition, parent/guardian, student, and Learning Mentor conferences are held each term to discuss students’ academic progress, social and emotional wellbeing and future goals and aspirations.

It is to be noted that since all mentors are employees of the school, the safety and ethical concerns normally associated with the external recruitment of volunteer mentors is a non-issue. In addition, it could be argued that an indirect by-product of this internal to organisation mentor recruitment is increased accountability. The program also benefits from the infrastructures and the human and fiscal resources of the school, and this is a result of the direct buy-in from the Principal and Principal’s Executive Team.

This inquiry will specifically extend the knowledge of school-based mentoring programs in the following fields:

- Whole-school approaches to school-based mentoring
- Factors that influence the experience of students and mentors within whole-school approaches
- Similarities and/or differences in experience of the program within the student and mentor stakeholder groups.

In addition, as dosage is replicated across all Learning Mentor Groups, the findings will contribute to broader conversations with regards to amount, intensity and
duration of mentor/student/mentor group contact within whole-school approach mentoring programs.

This type of study is not replicated in the literature, as traditional school-based programs typically:

(a) Target *at risk* cohorts and could therefore be considered exclusive in design and focus
(b) Recruit volunteer mentors from either the professional and broader community within which the school is placed and/or from the non-teaching sector of the school
(c) Meet with students on site but generally outside of school hours, e.g. before or after school
(d) Involve the establishment of dyads that have a life-span of less than 18 months
(e) Maintain a once weekly contact
(f) Utilise the classic or one-to-one mentoring approach.

### 2.5 CONCLUSION

This literature review is not exhaustive but “partial, situated and perspectival” (Lather 1999, p. 3) contoured by a positionality, which includes time. It has enabled the researcher to position the proposed inquiry historically and in doing so create a new space and a new energy for further work in the complex and ever expanding field of school-based mentoring.
CHAPTER 3 THE COLLEGE LEARNING MENTOR PROGRAM

This chapter of the thesis provides the background to the development and staged implementation of a school-based mentoring program delivered through a whole-school approach. Within this frame, the key infrastructural elements of the initiative, allocation protocols and the stakeholder preparation and feedback strategies employed to inform program development in its early stages are also detailed.

This initiative known as the Learning Mentor Program was implemented in an Australian Year 7 to Year 12 secondary school, identified in the inquiry as the College.

3.1 ABOUT THE LEARNING MENTOR PROGRAM

3.1.1 Program Origin and Focus

In 2008, in response to a College Leadership Team decision from the previous year, a Project Team was formed to research, design and implement a program for students that would help support and monitor their development as a learner throughout the duration of their secondary schooling. As noted in Chapter 1: 1.4, whilst team membership varied according to the phase and needs of the initiative, the researcher was one of two appointed ongoing members of this group, along with the Year 7 Student Development Leader. The Deputy Principal (Student Development) led the Project Team. A comprehensive review of the aims and relevance of the existing morning administration or Homebase period scheduled into the daily regime of all students commenced the process. The new and increasing demands of the 21st century learning context fuelled discussion and resulted in a desire and commitment to create a contact and support system for students that would have more of a direct line of influence in improving learning outcomes. The concept of the Learning Mentor Program was borne from this review.

The Program was implemented in 2010, framed by the following fundamental tenets:

(a) When students know themselves as a learner, they can maximise their opportunities through this knowledge.
(b) The learning life of each student can be further optimised if a strong relationship with at least one significant adult is developed and nurtured, with this adult knowing and mentoring the student as a learner.

(c) Students perform better when they are known, feel safe and are connected to community.

These tenets in turn informed the Program’s three key components:

1. **Community and Relationship Building**

The content and activities of this component are built around the following four themes: Compassion and Faith, Communities of Service, Creativity and Resilience, and Courage, Confidence and Integrity. The building of relationships between mentor and mentee, within mentor groups and their Learning Community, across communities and between mentors and families underpins this aspect of the program.

2. **CORE Curriculum**

The CORE curriculum has a broad theme of ‘Students knowing themselves as learners’ and two sub-themes of ‘thinking about thinking’ and ‘learning how to learn’. The key elements of the two sub-themes are:

(a) Thinking about Thinking
   - Connecting new information to former knowledge
   - Deliberately selecting thinking strategies
   - Planning, monitoring and evaluating learning

(b) Learning how to Learn
   - Knowing strengths and weaknesses and preferred learning style
   - Developing a broad and deep range of operating strategies for learning
   - Understanding the differences between surface and deep-level learning

Examples of CORE Program activities include: short/long term goal setting tasks, time management activities, development of an ongoing Learning Portfolio, subject selection and Year Level transition activities and the completion of SAI Student Preference Questionnaires. Mentor support of students with homework and academic tasks during independent study time as well as the encouragement of peer mentoring are also key activities fostered through the CORE component of the program.
3. **Parent (or guardian)/Student/Learning Mentor Conferences**

This aspect of the program involves formally scheduled interview sessions with the student, parent (or guardian) and the Learning Mentor to discuss learning progression and the wellbeing of the mentee. These meetings occur every 10 weeks, or 4 times per year. In addition, parent-mentor contact is encouraged as the need arises.

### 3.2 THE COLLEGE’S ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

It was recognised mid-development stage of the Program in early 2009 by the Project Team in consultation with the College Leadership Team, that consideration needed to be given to housing the initiative within an organisational structure that best facilitated Program activity and intent. In addition, since the focus of the new group loyalty was to be learning and not sport it was deemed necessary to establish a new frame to formally signal this change to the College community.

#### 3.2.1 Organisational Structure Prior to 2010

Prior to 2010, students were allocated to one of four Houses on enrolment at the College. It was policy and practice to allocate siblings to the same House. On average a House accommodated 258 students, which equated to a quarter of the total enrolment of 1,032 students. All Houses were further sub-divided into a system of 11 Homebases (see Figure 3-1) composed of approximately 26 students drawn from across each of the six year-levels, in preference to a horizontal grouping of one Year Level only. Siblings were generally not allocated to the same Homebase.

![Figure 3-1: The College House Structure Prior to 2010](image)
The House structure, through its division of the student body into four equitable teams, provided the frame for the internal sporting competitions as well as the broad point of connection to the College community. The Homebase system operating within the House structure promoted the operation and development of smaller communities within a larger community, and was therefore focused essentially on the pastoral care and wellbeing of the students. The administrative routines of maintaining attendance records and dissemination of information were carried out within the daily 13-minute morning Homebase session. With the exception of three smaller cohort groups, all Homebases were assigned two staff members recruited from the pool of the College teaching, library, careers, technical, welfare and learning support teams. No Homebase was allocated two non-teacher members of staff.

3.2.2 Organisational Structure from 2010

In developing an organisational structure that would best support the delivery of the aims, activities and intended outcomes of the Learning Mentor Program, a shift from the traditional House groupings was deemed necessary. Ratified by the Leadership group in April 2009, a six Learning Community model was tabled as the basis of the new structure, with each of the Learning Communities further sub-divided into seven Learning Mentor (or LM) Groups. However during allocation, it became obvious that one of the Learning Communities required an additional sub-group in order to accommodate a larger total number of siblings, whilst still respecting an approximately equal representation of students from each Year Level (see Figure 3-2). Some distinct features of the predecessor model were maintained in the reconfiguration:

(a) On enrolment, siblings were allocated to the same Learning Community but not the same Learning Mentor Group
(b) Learning Mentor Groups remained vertically organized, i.e. a mix of Year 7 to Year 12 students
(c) All Learning Mentor Groups were assigned two Learning Mentors, with at least one a teacher. All 14 non-teacher mentors occupied positions with the College that required frequent student contact and were drawn from the College’s
library, careers, technical, welfare and learning support staff as per the previous model.

It is important to note that the non-teacher mentors were invited into the mentoring role by the Principal and the Deputy Principal Student Development and Learning (the Learning Mentor Program Leader) based on their position, relational skills, experience and qualifications.

![Figure 3-2: The College Learning Community Model (from 2010)](image)

Structurally, the significant difference between the two models was the purposeful division of the student population into six rather than four groupings, thereby creating smaller communities within the College. Another difference was the allocation of all College staff to a Learning Community, although not necessarily to a Learning Mentor role.

### 3.3 ESTABLISHING THE LEARNING COMMUNITIES

#### 3.3.1 Appointment of Learning Community Leaders

In late Term 3 2009, Learning Community Leader positions were advertised and by mid-Term 4 the inaugural six Leaders were appointed. The position description posted detailed the purpose, scope and emphases of the role as well as the weekly time release of 7 periods (equating to 1.2 days) and the additional remuneration allocated to the position (see Appendix 1). The role was allocated a Level 2 Position of Leadership on a four-level scale, of which Level 1 was the highest. At that time, subject leaders also shared the same leadership level.
A formation day to commence induction of the Learning Community Leaders and to assign horizontal responsibilities within Year Levels took place in November, shortly after appointments were completed. Other work commenced included:

(a) The development of community naming protocols and a signatory colour allocation process
(b) The identification of the student leadership structure within Learning Communities
(c) Mapping of communication pathways for the initiative (see Figure 3-3)
(d) Workshopping the role of Learning Mentor (see Appendix 2)
(e) Consideration of future professional learning needs of Learning Community Leaders and Learning Mentors

3.3.2 Assigning Signature Colours to Communities

In late Term 4 2009, a colour consultant was employed by the College to facilitate a session with the newly appointed Learning Community Leaders to select a set of six signature colours. As a result, the four original House colours of red, blue, green and yellow were maintained and for no reason other than their distinctiveness, orange and purple were added. A ‘lucky dip’ allocation technique was utilised to assign a colour to a community, with trading permissible at the end of the process.
Figure 3-3: Learning Mentor Program Communication

- **Parent/Guardian or Student**
  - Make direct contact with the Learning Mentor, classroom teacher, or specialist service.

- **Learning Mentor (LM)**
  - LM to contact LCL, with unresolved issues between student and classroom teacher, ongoing student issues or if unable to respond to parent inquiry.

- **Classroom Teacher**
- **Learning and Teaching Leaders**
  - Senior Leader (Years 10-12)
  - Year 7 Leader
  - Year 8 Leader
  - Year 9 Leader
  - Subject Leaders

- **Specialist Service**
  - Wellbeing Team
  - Learning Support Team
  - Careers Advisor
  - Senior School Services
  - Middle School Services
  - Parents only contact the Learning Community Leader (LCL) when unable to contact the Learning Mentor. This contact path is taken for urgent issues or for ongoing concerns that have not been resolved.

- **Learning Community Leader (LCL)**
- **Deputy Principal**
  - Learning and Teaching
  - Student Development
  - Staff

- **Deputy Principal**

- **Principal**
3.3.3 Allocation of Staff and Students to Learning Communities

The allocation of staff members to Learning Communities and to their mentor pair was undertaken by the Principal and the Deputy Principal (Student Development and Learning), and published to the College staff community on November 27, 2009.

The allocation of students to Learning Communities and mentor groups was again managed by the Deputy Principal (Student Development and Learning) but in consultation with the Year Level Leaders, Subject Leaders and the Wellbeing and Learning Support Teams. Concluding the allocation process was a scan of the resultant communities for balance of sporting, academic and cultural talent.

Students were notified of their allocations on December 1 through a personalised letter from the College Learning Mentor Program Leader (also Project Team Leader), the Deputy Principal (Student Development and Learning). The letter officially advised each student of:

(a) The name of their Learning Mentor
(b) The names of the other students in their Learning Mentor group
(c) The colour assigned to their Learning Community
(d) The name of their Learning Community Leader
(e) The benefits of the Program
(f) How to manage change

3.3.4 Naming Communities

The selection criteria to inform the Learning Community naming process were derived from the central beliefs of the College Mission Statement: faith, service, community, justice, honesty, integrity, compassion and learning. Each Learning Community Leader led the collaborative process for their community at the start of 2010 which ended in a vote by students and mentors. The Principal and the Leadership Team ratified the Community names prior to the Opening College Assembly on March 1, 2010, where both the names and their genesis were officially announced to the College Community (see Table 3-1). At the same gathering, the four Houses of the previous model were formally retired.
In addition to a name and signature colour, each Learning Community was also allocated a defined gathering space within the College where, when required, the whole community could assemble.

### 3.4 PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION: A STAGED PROCESS

In August 2009, after a lengthy debate, the decision to stage the implementation of the Learning Mentor Program was decided by the residing Project Team in consultation with the Principal and College Leadership. It was recognised that there was going to be some significant change for both staff and students in 2010, aside from the implementation of the Program. The two changes in particular that would impact heavily on both teacher and information and communication technology (ICT) staff time were identified as the implementation of the Discovery 9 Middle Schooling Program (for the Year 9 cohort) and the Year 7 One-to-One Laptop Program.

By staging implementation, the change agenda for the College community would spread over a longer time period, thereby giving staff a greater preparatory period leading into full implementation of the Program. It was envisaged that this would result in a deeper understanding of both the purpose of moving to a support structure that had at its centre an implicit learning focus, as well as growing a greater awareness of the program’s potential for improving student outcomes.

---

**Table 3-1: The Six College Learning Communities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Name</th>
<th>Inspirational Role Model</th>
<th>Signature Colour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hollows</td>
<td>Fred Hollows (ophthalmologist)</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>da Vinci</td>
<td>Leonardo da Vinci (Renaissance artist)</td>
<td>Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chisholm</td>
<td>Caroline Chisholm (humanitarian)</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gandhi</td>
<td>Mahatma Gandhi (spiritual and political leader)</td>
<td>Orange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MacKillop</td>
<td>Mary MacKillop (co-founder of the Sisters of Saint Joseph)</td>
<td>Purple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malone</td>
<td>Lisa Malone (humanitarian and ex-student)</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4.1 Stage 1

Stage 1 of the Program was implemented at the start of Term 1, 2010. The principal focus of this initial stage was Developing the Identity of the Learning Community (including relationship building), and for Learning Mentors to establish contact with families through parent (or guardian)/student/Learning Mentor conferences. The delivery of CORE curriculum components that aligned with community development was a feature of this initial stage, as well as minor goal setting tasks and independent learning time, with access to assistance as required.

3.4.2 Stage 2

Stage 2 of the Program was implemented the following year (2011) with the delivery of the Program’s complete CORE curriculum. The curriculum content and activities were informed by the residing Project Team’s research into advocacy programs, learning styles and the development of learning how to learn skills, and from students’ voices gathered in the pre-planning phase of the initiative (see 3.5.2 for further detail).

3.5 PREPARATION OF STAKEHOLDERS

3.5.1 College Staff

Throughout 2009, a number of staff meetings were held to report on progress to date in the development of the Learning Mentor Program. At each gathering, staff were asked to provide feedback to the Project Team using the following prompts:

(a) What has been missed?
(b) Your ideas/suggestions?
(c) What needs further clarification?
(d) What looks good?

These data were collated and returned to staff via a Responding to Staff Feedback proforma within a week of each meeting (see Appendix 3 for feedback on the June 30, 2009 staff meeting). Keeping staff engaged in conversation about the Program prior to implementation was seen to be a critical component of the move to the new system, and informally commenced an ownership that would have been difficult to achieve had the program been imposed without consultation. More formal
Professional Learning sessions for staff were held in August and December 2009, and at the start of 2010 in preparation for the implementation of Stage 1.

In the December 2010 and January 2011 Professional Learning time, the emphasis was on implementation of Stage 2 of the Program. Content of the sessions on each occasion included a focus on one or more of the following thematic bands:

- Learning Community Leader role
- Learning Mentor role
- Conflict resolution
- CORE curriculum content
- Developing relationships
- Listening skills
- Mandatory reporting/wellbeing processes
- Communication protocols and behaviour management
- Community building
- Conversations with parents and students

Session material was delivered by either identified external field experts remunerated for their work, or by members of the Project Team or by Learning Community Leaders skilled through recent professional learning in a specific area. A mix of workshops and lecture-style presentations comprised the delivery modes.

After the implementation of Stage 2, the fundamental tenets of the Program were also revisited in dedicated Professional Learning sessions and through the scheduled weekly Learning Community meetings. There was general agreement that this ongoing discourse was vital to sustaining both the health and development of the initiative.

3.5.2 Students

Program preparation for this stakeholder group formally commenced in late July 2009, when students were invited to complete an online questionnaire titled ‘About Improving My Learning at the College’ (see Appendix 4). Their voice was sought from the Project Team to help validate the intent of the initiative. After this period, more detailed information sessions about the Program and its stages of development were scheduled into College assembly agendas and morning Homebase meetings,
intensifying in frequency throughout the latter part of 2009. It is to be noted that the focus of the preparation for students was on information about how the Program would operate within the learning facility, rather than specifically preparing the student for their mentoring experience. After the implementation of Stage 1 in 2010, all aspects of Program development were conveyed through the weekly 72-minute Learning Mentor session and/or Learning Community gatherings.

A Closer Look at the Student Questionnaire

The online student questionnaire administered in late July 2009 (see Appendix 4) invited students to respond on a 5-point Likert scale to a set of questions about Improving Learning. The responses to each question were then graphically presented in the following categories (see Appendix 5):

(a) Whole School
(b) Individual Year Levels
(c) Middle School (Years 7-9)
(d) Senior School (Years 10-12)

The data were organised in this way to enable the initiative’s Project Team to identify patterns or trends in responses that presented across Years 7-12 and/or within specific cohorts, e.g Middle School. At the time of this data gathering exercise, College enrolment figures stood at 1,032. Of this number, 849 students across Years 7-12 (or 82.4%) completed the questionnaire. The data from the whole school, middle school and senior school cohorts are presented in Table 3-2 and individual Year Level data are presented in Table 3-3. Both tables map the aggregation of the agreement response rates (i.e. only agree + strongly agree) from the Appendix 5 graphs. This enabled the Project Team to identify through agreement response data a general response pattern for each item.
Table 3-2: Whole School, Middle School and Senior School Questionnaire Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions 1-7</th>
<th>Agreement Response Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whole School (Years 7-12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Someone helped me keep up to date with tasks and assignments</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Someone regularly checked my progress in all my subjects</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I had the opportunity to sit down with someone to talk about my learning throughout the term</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I had someone who would help me with any learning problems I encounter</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I had help to work out how I learn best</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I had help to know how to use different learning strategies like concept maps and brainstorming</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Someone knew my strengths and weaknesses as a learner and worked with me to improve my performance</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As identified by the bolded response rates in each of the two tables, the four key practices acknowledged by all cohorts and Year Levels that would support their learning improvement were:

1. Someone knowing my strengths and weaknesses as a learner and working with me to improve my performance (see Table 3-2, Q.7; Table 3-3, Q.7).
2. Someone to help me with any learning problems I encounter (see Table 3-2, Q.4; Table 3-3, Q.4).
3. Someone to help me keep up to date with tasks and assignments (see Table 3-2, Q.1; Table 3-3, Q.1).
4. Someone who regularly checked my progress in all my subjects (see Table 3-2, Q.2; Table 3-3, Q.2).

Whilst the Year 12 participatory cohort were the only Year Level that were supportive of the opportunity to ‘sit down with someone to talk about my learning throughout the term’ (see Table 3-3, Q.3), the neither agree or disagree response category drew significant response returns from the other five Year Levels on the
same item (see Appendix 5, Q.3). This *neither agree or disagree* response trend was also evident in all participatory cohort data for the other two least supported items:

*My Learning would improve at the College if ….*

1. I had help to work out how I learn best (see Appendix 5, Q.5).
2. I had help to know how to use different learning strategies like concept maps and brainstorming (see Appendix 5, Q.6).

The large returns through the *neither agree or disagree* categories to questionnaire items 3, 5 and 6 (see Appendix 5) were interpreted by the Project Team as either a lack of understanding of what the improvement activity would entail, and/or a lack of understanding of its capacity to support learning improvement.

Overall, the data evidenced the need to introduce a support program into the College that was more directly aligned with improving student learning outcomes, with the program to include a progress monitoring component facilitated by a staff member that remained a constant in the learning life of the student, was cognisant of their strengths and weaknesses, and was available to assist with learning needs as required.

### 3.5.3 Parents

The Learning Mentor Program was launched to College parents at an information session in late August 2009. The theme of the presentation was ‘Seeking to Improve Student Outcomes in Post-Modern Times’ and was delivered by two members of the project team, one being the Program leader and the other the researcher. As Homebase (the predecessor to the Learning Mentor Program) was valued by parents for its emphasis on the pastoral care of students, the presentation necessarily focused on the new demands of the 21st century learning context, and how these needed to be understood and interpreted by schools in terms of their learning support structures. Question time at the forum revealed general support for the initiative but also highlighted areas that needed further investigation and clarification by the Project Team. In addition to the information session, all parents/guardians received a letter introducing them to the Program and inviting contact should there be any queries or
concerns. The College newsletter continued to inform parents of progress in Program development up to and post-implementation.

3.6  CREATING TIME FOR THE LEARNING MENTOR PROGRAM

3.6.1  Stage 1: Implemented in 2010

It was the recommendation of the Project Team in consultation with the College Leadership Group that the Learning Mentor Program be delivered in its inaugural year through a daily 10-minute morning contact time plus a weekly 40-minute lesson, with this Program time allocation increasing in Stage 2.

In developing a schedule that would accommodate the inclusion of this time, the following had to be taken into consideration: (1) a full-time teachers load was not to exceed 20 hours or 1,200 minutes weekly of face-to-face teaching; (2) Face-to-face teaching was to include all Learning Mentor time + teaching hours; and (3) Yard duties were not to be included in the calculation of face-to-face teaching hours.

A comparison of the 2009 and 2010 College timetabling considerations are mapped in Table 3-4.
Table 3-4: Comparative Data Sets: College Timetabling Considerations 2009/2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timetable Considerations</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning Administration (mins)</td>
<td>Homebase (HB) = 13 minutes/day</td>
<td>Learning Mentor (LM) = 10 minutes/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total No. Timetabled Lessons</td>
<td>30 per week (6 per day)</td>
<td>31 per week = 7 on Mon* + 6 on other 4 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Timetable Cycle</td>
<td>5 days</td>
<td>5 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Length (minutes)</td>
<td>30 lessons x 47 minutes each</td>
<td>(30 x 41 mins) + (1 x 40 mins (LM)) lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-Time Teacher Load (mins)</td>
<td>• 5 x 13 mins/day = 65 mins</td>
<td>• 5 x 10 min/day = 50 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 24 x 47 min lessons = 1128 mins</td>
<td>• 1 x 40 min LM = 40 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong> = 1193 mins</td>
<td>• 23 x 46 min Lessons = 1158 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 1 x 41 min Lesson = 41 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong> = 1189 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-Time Teacher Load (hrs)</td>
<td>1193 minutes = 19.88 hours</td>
<td>1189 minutes = 19.82 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 40-minute Learning Mentor lesson was scheduled on a Monday Period 1 in 2010 and occurred as the 31st timetabled lesson.
With reference to the data in Table 3-4, it is to be noted that both models were inefficient in terms of realising the weekly 20-hour full-time equivalent (FTE) loading and therefore maximising the use of the associated human and fiscal resources. Each model fell short of the FTE by approximately 1 period weekly - 52 minutes in 2009 and 49 minutes in 2010. This was due to the differences in the number of subjects undertaken by Year Levels within the middle and senior schools, as well as the differences in the number of lessons allocated to subject areas across Year Levels.

Another requirement in the development of the Stage 1 model was for the start and finish times of the school day to mirror the 2009 schedule (see Table 3-5) so that all students (country and local) could access the available bus services. Lesson changeover times, and recess and lunch breaks were therefore altered to accommodate these fixed points. Both the 2009 and 2010 schedules follow, with the 2010 schedule mapped in two frames - Table 3-6 (a) Learning Mentor Lesson Day and Table 3-6 (b) the remainder of the week.

Table 3-5: Bell Timetable Schedule 2009: Monday to Friday

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Start Time</th>
<th>Finish Time</th>
<th>Minutes</th>
<th>Lesson Change Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homebase Alert</td>
<td>8.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homebase (Morn. Admin)</td>
<td>8.55</td>
<td>9.08</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 1</td>
<td>9.11</td>
<td>9.58</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 2</td>
<td>10.01</td>
<td>10.48</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recess</td>
<td>10.48</td>
<td>11.10</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 3</td>
<td>11.13</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 4</td>
<td>12.03</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch 1</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>13.12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch 2</td>
<td>13.12</td>
<td>13.34</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 5</td>
<td>13.38</td>
<td>14.25</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 6</td>
<td>14.28</td>
<td>15.15</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3-6(a): Bell Timetable Schedule 2010 for Monday: Learning Mentor Lesson Day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Start Time</th>
<th>Finish Time</th>
<th>Minutes</th>
<th>Lesson Change Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning Alert</td>
<td>8.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Mentor (Admin)</td>
<td>8.55</td>
<td>9.05</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Mentor</td>
<td>9.05</td>
<td>9.45</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 1</td>
<td>9.50</td>
<td>10.31</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>4 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 2</td>
<td>10.35</td>
<td>11.16</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recess</td>
<td>11.16</td>
<td>11.36</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 3</td>
<td>11.40</td>
<td>12.21</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 4</td>
<td>12.25</td>
<td>13.06</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch 1</td>
<td>13.06</td>
<td>13.26</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch 2</td>
<td>13.26</td>
<td>13.46</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 5</td>
<td>13.49</td>
<td>14.30</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>4 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 6</td>
<td>14.34</td>
<td>15.15</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-6(b): Bell Timetable Schedule 2010: Tuesday to Friday

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Start Time</th>
<th>Finish Time</th>
<th>Minutes</th>
<th>Lesson Change Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning Alert</td>
<td>8.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Mentor (Admin)</td>
<td>8.55</td>
<td>9.05</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 1</td>
<td>9.10</td>
<td>9.56</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 2</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>10.46</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recess</td>
<td>10.46</td>
<td>11.06</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 3</td>
<td>11.10</td>
<td>11.56</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 4</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>12.46</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch 1</td>
<td>12.46</td>
<td>13.11</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch 2</td>
<td>13.11</td>
<td>13.36</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 5</td>
<td>13.39</td>
<td>14.25</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 6</td>
<td>14.29</td>
<td>15.15</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.6.2 Stage 2: Implemented in 2011

Stage 2 of the Learning Mentor Program was implemented along with the following three scheduling changes ratified by the College Leadership Team:

(a) An increase the overall time allocation to the Learning Mentor Program
(b) Longer learning blocks in the Senior School (10-12)
(c) Personal Learning lesson allocation in the Senior School (10-12)
In addition to these changes, the feedback from staff in late July 2010 on Stage 1 of the Learning Mentor Program (see Appendix 6) indicated general support for the following scheduling issues to be taken into account in the design and development of the Stage 2 model:

(a) Maintain 1 x long Learning Mentor period per week
(b) Schedule the long Learning Mentor period on a day other than a Monday
(c) Schedule the Learning Mentor period later in the day (unlike in Stage 1 where it commenced the school day)
(d) Develop one scheduling structure for the week (unlike in 2010 where lesson lengths differed on a Monday to the remainder of the week in order to timetable the Learning Mentor period).

There was also a requirement for the Stage 2 model to better accommodate part-timers, allow for adequate recess and lunch breaks, and be resource-efficient. An overview of the structural features of the 2011 model is summarised in Table 3-7.

Table 3-7: Overview of 2011 Timetabling Considerations Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timetable Considerations</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning Administration (mins)</td>
<td>Learning Mentor (LM) = 8 minutes/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total No. Timetabled Lessons</td>
<td>4 lessons per day; 20 per week; 40 per cycle;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Timetable Cycle</td>
<td>10 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Length (mins)</td>
<td>20 lessons x 72 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(includes long Learning Mentor lesson)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-Time Teacher Load (mins)</td>
<td>• 5 x 8 minutes/day = 40 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 1 x 72 minute LM = 72 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 15 x 72 minute Lessons = 1080 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong> = 1192 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-Time Teacher Load (hrs)</td>
<td>1192 minutes = 19.87 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The length of the longer lesson blocks and the subsequent period allocations for courses in the 2011 model, coupled with the introduction of the longer Learning Mentor period and the single Personal Learning period across the three senior year levels (Years 10-12), enabled greater efficiency in staffing and a decrease in
underloaded personnel. The 2011 model, mapped as a *Bell Timetable Schedule*, follows:

Table 3-8: Bell Timetable Schedule 2011: Monday to Friday

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Start Time</th>
<th>Finish Time</th>
<th>Minutes</th>
<th>Lesson Change Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning Alert</td>
<td>8.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Mentor (Admin)</td>
<td>8.55</td>
<td>9.03</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 1</td>
<td>9.07</td>
<td>10.19</td>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recess</td>
<td>10.19</td>
<td>10.39</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 2</td>
<td>10.43</td>
<td>11.55</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>4 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 3</td>
<td>11.59</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>4 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 4</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 2011 model was maintained as the structural frame accommodating the Learning Mentor period in subsequent years.

3.7 LESSONS FROM STAGE 1

3.7.1 More from Learning Mentor Feedback (July, 2010)

Apart from scheduling issues, three other significant items emerged from the Learning Mentor Feedback exercise in July 2010 (Appendix 6) and informed some elements and organization of Stage 2 of program delivery. These items were:

(a) *Program Content*

There was a clear call for the content/curriculum of the program to:
- Have relevance to students in each Year Level
- Focus on the learning needs of the students – work habits, homework etc.
- Allow for flexibility and choice within a clearly defined structure

(b) *Workload Issues*

Workload issues were registered as the largest concern in the feedback, with 39 of the 53 (= 74%) of the response sheets indicating that the Learning Mentor Program had increased workload. Of these 39 respondents, 12 recommended that the new demands of the mentoring role be formally recognized in workloads, while 11 noted that if a teacher was on a full teaching load (i.e. no leadership role or other time
allocation) then finding time to complete the additional tasks associated with the mentoring role was more difficult and impacting on lesson preparation time.

In response to the workload issue concerns, a *No Extras Policy* was introduced at the start of Stage 2 of the initiative in 2011, in recognition of the additional workload the Learning Mentor Program was presenting and its potential impact on ongoing Program development. The implementation of this policy removed the practice of allocating an additional class or yard duty supervision to full-time or part-time teaching staff in the event of a teacher absence.

(c) *Parent (or Guardian)/Student/Learning Mentor Conferences*

Although recognized by Learning Mentors as a valuable and critical component of the program, there was general support to review the 4 *face-to-face* parent (or guardian)/student/Learning Mentor conferences per year. The number of contacts was not being contested, but rather the mode of contact, when other information channels were available.

### 3.7.2 Other Observations from Stage 1

The following concerns were also tabled during the inaugural year of program implementation:

(a) A reliance in some Learning Mentor Groups on the online learning platform (known as the RM Platform) as the primary carrier of program content, rather than it being just a carrier of resources for use within the Learning Mentor Program

(b) Inability of the RM Platform to cope with the large number of users during the Learning Mentor lesson, often resulting in staged access

(c) Mixed understandings from Learning Community Leaders as to the primary purpose of their role, resulting in differing interpretations of *leading learning* practices within Learning Communities

(d) ICT skill differences across Learning Mentors and the impact on electronic resource usage, program implementation, and monitoring of student progress

(e) The need to provide ongoing and formal professional learning for Learning Mentors on mentoring, development of community, learning styles and learning how to learn skills
(f) A reluctance by some Learning Mentors to retire the Homebase approach and embrace the Learning Mentor model

(g) Difficulties accessing online questionnaires used in the CORE due to slow network performance (caused by bandwidth issues); program content on occasions was dependent on completion of these instruments

(h) Maintaining consistency in the delivery of information to students by Learning Mentors and/or Learning Community Leaders

(i) Where a change of Learning Mentor was necessary to accommodate staff leave or resignations, program implementation often necessarily took a back seat to relationship building, and this further accentuated the disparity in completion of Program activities within and across Learning Communities

(j) The need to appoint a staff member or team to continually develop the content of the CORE curriculum in response to need as informed by Learning Mentors, students, parents and the broader educational research community.

3.7.3 Responding to Stage 1 Feedback in Stage 2

Stage 2 of the Learning Mentor Program incorporated the following four changes in response to feedback from Learning Mentors in Stage 1:

(a) All six Learning Community Leaders were allocated an additional period in their teaching load to take on the responsibility of the ongoing development of the Program’s CORE curriculum. This time allocation in total equated to \( (6 \times 72 \text{ minutes}) = 432 \text{ minutes} \), equal to 7.2 hours or 1.5 school days.

(b) A meeting agenda was co-developed weekly by Learning Community Leaders for use at their respective Learning Mentor team meetings. This was to ensure greater consistency in delivery of information and/or Program content to Learning Mentor Groups across the College.

(c) All Learning Communities received the same material for distribution.

(d) A schedule of long Learning Mentor period activities was to be published at the beginning of each school term for Learning Mentors and students.

In addition to these changes, Year 12 students were only expected to participate in all components of the Learning Mentor Program for the first 2.5 of the 3 terms of their final year of schooling, after which they had the option to use Learning Mentor time to complete assessment tasks and to prepare for the final examination period. This
was in response to Year 12 (2010) feedback to Learning Mentors at the conclusion of their enrolment period at the College.

3.8 CONCLUSION

The Learning Mentor Program is a College initiative designed to provide a contact and support system for students that would have a more direct influence in improving learning outcomes. Stage 1 of the Program was implemented in 2010, followed by Stage 2 in 2011. It is anticipated that this inquiry into the factors that influence the experience of participants in a school-based mentoring program delivered through a whole-school approach will offer contributions to both the ongoing development of the initiative and to the broader context of youth mentoring schemes.
CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

This chapter of the thesis presents and justifies the philosophical assumptions and design strategies chosen to frame this inquiry in order to address the research questions. It commences with a descriptor of the intent of the study and acknowledgement of insider researcher status, followed by the identification and validation of the following key design elements:

- Paradigmatic approach
- Case Study methodology as the inquiry strategy
- Recruitment processes and ethical considerations
- Data gathering and analysis techniques

Strategies employed to establish the trustworthiness of the case and problems encountered in producing data are also presented and discussed within the chapter. The research methodology and design elements were selected to best enable the development of new knowledge from the study.

This study aimed to investigate the experiences of students and mentors in a purpose-built school-based Learning Mentor Program delivered through a whole-school approach in a regional Year 7-12 Australian secondary school, in order to identify what factors most influence outcomes for participatory groups within such contexts. The new knowledge and understandings emanating from the inquiry are further theorised later in the thesis to inform the broader context of school-based mentoring schemes.

4.1 RESEARCHING FROM THE INSIDE

Because of the researcher-researched relationship in this study, it is important to once again position the investigator in relation to the research domain. This acknowledgement of place will contribute to the credibility of the study.

Positioning the Researcher

As noted earlier in Chapter 1 of the thesis, the researcher was an employee of the research site up until the end of the data collection period of the inquiry, simultaneously occupying the following three roles:
In addition, from 2009 to 2012 the researcher was a core member of the Project Team that led the development and implementation of the *Learning Mentor Program*, the case of interest in this inquiry. An insider researcher status is therefore identified through the two lenses of employment and working knowledge of the case under investigation. As expected, the researcher did not contribute data to the study because of this declared status.

Villenas (1996, p. 722) argues that “as researchers, we can be insiders and outsiders to a particular community of research participants at many different levels and at different times”. The benefits of the former perspective are summarised by Merriam et al. (2001, p. 411) as the projection of a “more truthful authentic understanding of the culture under study”, and the authors list ease of access to the research site and therefore respondent groups, the ability to ask more meaningful questions, and the capacity to pickup on and read non-verbal cues because of context familiarity as specific advantages. Knowledge of the formal and informal power structures and the “moral mazes and subtexts” (Hannabus 2000, p. 103) within an organisation are also cited in the literature as facilitating the research process. Bourdieu’s (1988, p. 27) descriptor of the emic stance as one where the researcher has a “feel for the game and the hidden rules” in many ways provides a more open summary of the insider perspective, and the researcher positions herself within this frame.

As the researcher in this study occupied a senior leadership role within the organisation both prior to and during many phases of the research period, it could be argued that this positional status either “engendered a greater level of candour than would otherwise be the case” (Mercer 2007, p. 7) or in fact limited the inquiry by influencing who was willing to participate and subsequently the breadth and depth of revelations. However, as detailed later in section 4.4.1 of this chapter, both student and Learning Mentor participatory rates were significant as were the steps undertaken to minimise participant coercion. In addition, the data gathering instrument most accessed by respondent groups was an anonymous online questionnaire, and so overall capacity to influence response was minimised. It is also
recorded that the researcher was appointed to a position inter-state after the data collection period, thus assuming outsider status during the data analysis and final write-up phases of the study. This removal from the research site assisted to minimize any conscious or unconscious biases by locating the researcher solely within the research process as researcher, and therefore not confronted by role duality.

Therefore, the most apt descriptor of the research journey of this study is Mercer’s (2007) insider-outsider continuum, rather than Olson’s (1977) dichotomous perspective, with positioning along this continuum influenced by the activity and inter-activities of the inquiry phases. In summary, the researcher is confident that a synergy of emic and etic insights resulting from oscillating between the two perspectives has stimulated and mobilised this investigation.

Yet, the question remains as to what extent “different degrees of insiderness (and)/or outsiderness affect research processes and influence findings” (Mercer 2007, p. 14). Explicit investigations of this type, particularly in educational contexts, would be welcomed given the exponential increase in insider small-scale studies within these settings over the last decade.

4.2 IDENTIFYING THE RESEARCH PARADIGM

Guba and Lincoln (1994) proffer that a paradigm “is a set of basic beliefs (representing) a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the world, the individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts” (p. 107). Bogdan and Biklen (1998), although less specific, in many ways align with this thinking, defining the same term as a “loose collection of logically related assumptions, concepts, or propositions that orient thinking and research” (p. 22). What is understood to be the general role of the paradigm within the research world is summarised simply and succinctly by Ritzer (1975, p. 7): “The paradigm is the broadest unit of consensus within a science and serves to differentiate one scientific community (or sub community) from another”.

Not all studies nominate a paradigm and those that do often ascribe varying emphases as well as conflicting understandings of the term. In line with the thinking of MacKenzie and Knipe (2006), who insist that nominating a paradigm is essential
in a research endeavour as it sets the “intent, expectations and motivation for the research” (p. 194), the philosophical position framing and guiding this qualitative inquiry is that of the interpretivist paradigm. This orientation relies on *revealing the participants view of their reality* (Lather 1992; Robottom & Hart 1993) and demands from the researcher an “active involvement in the process of negotiated meaning”, which, if successful, “will be able to identify patterns of meaning which emerge, and then generalise from them” (Connole 1993, p. 14). Since a positivist approach depends on quantifiable observations that lead to statistical analysis to determine the validity of knowledge and limit the researcher to data collection and interpretation through objectivism, interpretivism best suits the approach to knowing employed by this inquiry because of the nature of the case under study.

It has been argued by some operating within other (mainly positivist) paradigms that since interpretivism is concerned with understanding the way people make sense of the social world (Nudzor 2009), this approach is open to both researcher bias (in terms of drawing meaning from the accrued data) and participant subjectivity (with the latter potentially delivering contradictory and inconsistent explanations). However it is to be noted that these “trivial but often crucial pauses and overlaps” (Nudzor 2009, p. 118) are significant, and form a rich *subset* within any data source regardless of paradigm selection. Another criticism is that the approach is limiting, producing findings that do not generalise well beyond the scope of the immediate inquiry. Robust generalisations, however, are essentially an anticipated product of quantitative studies. In qualitative research, the degree to which findings can be *transferred* to other similar contexts is a more appropriate measure of the strength of the research findings, and this is applicable to this study. Detailed contextual information about the research site and a thick description of the phenomenon under investigation has been provided in Chapter 3 of the thesis.

Finally, Denscombe (2002) asserts that a high degree of rigour will be attained and sustained in studies of this orientation, if a systematic research approach is developed and delivered throughout the duration of the inquiry. Such rigour is evidenced throughout this study.
4.3 CASE STUDY RESEARCH

Case study research has been described as “the most flexible of all research designs” (Schell 1992, p. 1), and “one of the most challenging of all social science endeavours” (Yin 2014, p. 3). It is recognised in the literature as being both trans-paradigmatic and trans-disciplinary, and this may in some way explain the presence of the plethora of descriptors of the heuristic evident in case study research scholarship over the last thirty years. The following definitions from Yin (2014), Stake (1995), Merriam (1990) and Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) represent such diversity of interpretation and orientation:

A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the “case”) in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident … (It) relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion (Yin 2014, p. 16-17).

Case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances (Stake 1995, p.xi).

Case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon or social unit. (They are) particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic and rely heavily on inductive reasoning in handling multiple data sources (Merriam 1990, p. 21).

(Case study commits) to the study and portrayal of the idiosyncratic and the particular as being legitimate forms of inquiry themselves (Hitchcock and Hughes 1995, p. 321).

It should be noted that there is some similarity between these interpretations in that they all recognise case study as a research strategy, imply the study of a bounded system, and insist by definition on the retention of the individuality of the case. For the purposes of this study, however, Yin’s (2014) conceptualisation of case study...
research will be employed as it integrates the critical aspects of the other orientations.

4.3.1 Becoming Particular: Situating the Case

This research project adopted a single case study methodology as the strategy of inquiry and employed the data collection methods of semi-structured interviews, a focus group and online questionnaires, but within an overall qualitative design. The choice of the qualitative methods was deemed necessary by the researcher in order to best produce the synergies required to address the research questions. The questionnaire accommodated data to be coded as descriptive statistics to facilitate pattern recognition from the Likert-response scale questions, and as words from the open-ended response questions. Maxwell (2010, p. 480) supports the way numbers are used in this study as a ‘legitimate and valuable strategy for qualitative researchers.

The unit of analysis or the case in this inquiry is the Learning Mentor Program. It may be argued that the case presents as a single system composed of dual units, with the inner shell formed by the program wrapped by an outer shell of institutional form. Whilst it is recognised that context will influence program performance, the focus of the study was to illuminate new knowledge and understanding through participants’ experiences of a whole-school approach to mentoring through the lens of learning, and therefore the program only constitutes the case.

In an early work, Parlett and Hamilton (1972) specifically targeted innovatory programs and practices as the ideal case, and this in many ways provides another justification for the methodological choice in this inquiry. In addition, interpretivism supports the employment of case study and naturalistic inquiry approaches, as it “assumes that there are many points of entry into any given reality, … emphasizes an often story-like rendering of a problem and an iterative process of constructing the case” (VanWynsberghe & Khan 2007, p. 94), and presumes close collaboration between the researcher and the informants. Therefore, the paradigmatic choice and methodology are also aligned.

Stake (1995) identifies a case study as either intrinsic, instrumental or collective by nature and these three descriptors alone evidence the scope of this type of inquiry.
Lincoln and Guba (1985) also put forward a taxonomy, but one where the purpose of the study informs choice, and this is illustrated by their descriptors of chronicling, rendering, describing and/or teaching. Earlier, however, Parlett and Hamilton (1972) had tabled the illuminative approach, claiming specifically that it was best suited to the study of innovatory programs or practices in educational research. They identified the aims of such an approach as follows:

“… to discover and document what it is like to be participating in the scheme, whether as teacher or pupil; and, in addition, to discern and discuss the innovation’s most significant features, recurring concomitants and critical processes. In short it seeks to illuminate a complex array of questions” (Parlett & Hamilton 1972, p. 10).

An illuminative investigation can assume a diversity of forms, making it both a flexible and eclectic strategy to employ. It is primarily concerned with description and interpretation in preference to measurement and prediction, but this emphasis raises the concern of the subjectivity of the approach and therefore its scientific rigour. However as with all research studies (whether qualitative or quantitative), skilled human judgements are required and they are therefore vulnerable to subjective bias. Another issue that has been tabled is the capacity of this form of inquiry to be applied to large-scale innovations; can it “move from the particular to the universal” (Parlett & Hamilton 1972, p. 19)? Whilst this investigation constitutes a particular, the transfer of elements of methodology and design into parallel contexts for similar purposes is possible, and therefore under these conditions scope is not a limiting factor.

In summary, this inquiry takes the form of an illuminative case study situated within an interpretivist framework, as this best-fits the nature of the investigation.

4.3.2 Strategies Employed to Strengthen Trustworthiness of the Case Study

Since naturalist inquiries are based on different assumptions about reality compared to positivist studies, the authority of such work needs to be established in a different way to demonstrate the investigative rigour of the research without sacrificing its relevance. The strategies employed to do so are based on Lincoln and Guba’s (1985)
constructs of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Whilst these four descriptors parallel the positivist evaluation criteria of internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity (Shenton, 2004), they have been specifically employed in this study because they best suit the interpretivist nature of the work.

Strategies to increase the trustworthiness of an inquiry can be employed throughout varying phases of the research process, including study design, data collection and post-data analysis. It is also to be noted that whilst some strategies can be used to establish more than one of the nominated constructs, a strategy is generally allocated to the field where it is most frequently applied (Krefting, 1991). What follows are the strategies employed in this inquiry through the lens of each of the nominated constructs to establish the trustworthiness of the study.

**Credibility**

A study is deemed credible if confidence can be placed in the truth of the research findings, i.e. if the findings link clearly with reality. The following strategies were employed to ensure rigor within this field: Prolonged engagement, data method and data source triangulation, peer debriefing and member checking.

(a) Prolonged Engagement

Prolonged engagement refers to spending adequate time in a research setting to build trust with the participants and gain a better understanding of the site’s social context. Because of the insider researcher status of the investigator, trust and rapport with both participatory groups were already established and the researcher had an intimate understanding of the contextual influences operating within the research site. This submersion in the research setting enabled and fostered a cleaner identification and verification of the recurrent themes and patterns emerging from the data, i.e. a more holistic capture of what is truly important to stakeholders.

(b) Triangulation

Krefting (1991) defines triangulation as “the idea of (converging) multiple perspectives for mutual confirmation of data to ensure that all aspects of a phenomenon have been investigated” (Krefting, 1991, p. 219). Both data method and data source triangulation were employed in the study to strengthen the evidence and
enhance credibility of the findings. Methods used to collect data were online questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and a focus group. The utilisation of a range of methods “compensates for their individual limitations and exploits their respective benefits” (Shenton, 2004, p. 65). The two data sources or informant groups contributing to the inquiry were students and Learning Mentors. From the experience of both groups emerged outcomes based on the varying perspectives, thus contributing to the credibility of the study.

(c) Peer Debriefing

Peer debriefing involves the researcher discussing the research design and findings with impartial field experts, who “question interpretations, provoke critical thinking and provide alternative/additional perspectives” (Hadi, 2016, p. 6) in order to improve or validate the quality of the research.

Two peer debriefing activities occurred during the research period. Regular researcher/supervisor meetings took place to potentially widen the vision of the researcher through the experiences and perceptions of a significant other. The meetings also provided a sounding board for the researcher to “test developing ideas and interpretations and ... to recognise biases and preferences” (Shenton, 2004, p. 67). Furthermore, peer scrutiny of the research project by panel of academics occurred at the 2014 Consortium of Asia-Pacific Education Universities (CAPEU) Research Symposium. The questions and observations made by the panel resulted in the researcher amending some elements of the research design and developing more explicit arguments as to paradigmatic and methodological choice.

(d) Member Checking

Member checking relates to the confirmation of the accuracy of the data collected from respondent groups by respondent groups, as well as the interpretations and conclusions drawn from this material.

The following three member checking activities occurred during the research period:

- Prior to administration of the online questionnaire, feedback was sought from four Learning Community Leaders and four Learning Mentors on the following features of both the Learning Mentor and Student Questionnaires: Overall readability of the instruments, relevance of the questions to the Learning Mentor
Program and to the participatory group, and understanding of question intent. One student from each of the six Year Levels, identified by the English Key Learning Area Leader as a typical cohort representative, also contributed feedback but specifically on the Student Questionnaire.

- Both an individual’s voice transcript and a provisional analysis of the semi-structured interview data were made available to each of the ten interview participants for feedback on the accuracy of the interpretations and conclusions.
- Both the voice transcript and the provisional analysis of the focus group data were made available to each of the five focus group participants for feedback on the accuracy of the interpretations and conclusions.

**Transferability**

Transferability relies on the researcher to provide sufficient contextual information about the research to enable a reader to determine whether findings from the study can be generalised or transferred to similar settings. Over the course of the research period, detailed reporting of the research project context, design and phenomena (i.e. thick data descriptions) was completed to enable readers to make their own judgements as to whether a transfer of the scaffolds of such activity could be made to similar environments. This supports the transferability of the research.

**Dependability**

Guba (1981) ascertains that the dependability of a study relates to consistency of findings should it be repeated in the same context, with the same stakeholder groups using the same methods by another researcher. Since Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that the constructs of dependability and credibility are closely tied and that a demonstration of the latter in many ways contributes to confirmation of the former, the dependability of the research has in many ways already been verified.

**Confirmability**

Confirmability is considered to be the degree to which the findings of an inquiry can be confirmed as being shaped by the respondents and not by researcher bias, motivation or interest (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
The following activities support confirmability of the research:

- Data method and data source triangulation were employed to reduce investigator bias
- Problems encountered in producing data were identified
- A detailed research methodology was provided within the thesis
- Records were maintained to support a data-oriented audit of the project. These records include:
  - Raw data from all data collection methods – questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and focus group
  - Data reduction documents, i.e. results of each thematic analysis
  - Transcriptions from all semi-structured interviews and the focus group

Through employment of all strategies tabled, Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) constructs of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability are satisfied and thus the trustworthiness and utility of the research into the phenomenon under scrutiny have been verified.

4.3.3 Case Study and the Educational Context

There is an increased interest in contemporary educational literature in the use of Case Study, and this re-emergence has been attributed to its potential for revealing rich contextual findings not easily obtained by methods that rely on derivative, statistical data. In addition to the latter, the following advantages have also been identified:

(a) Reinterpretation is accommodated
(b) Case Study enables the recognition of established social truths
(c) Case complexity is immersed and understood in the research process
(d) Research outcomes have potential to inform all players in the educational sector
(e) Data presentation is in an easily accessible form

However, MacDonald and Walker (1975) advise that since case research within an educational context takes the researcher into “a complex set of politically sensitive relationships” (p. 6), a democratic in preference to an autocratic or bureaucratic approach needs to be adopted because it rejects the “monopolistic concepts of control and access” (p. 7). They proffer that the critical traits of this democratic approach are
that it recognizes value pluralism, respects and honours informed citizenry, produces reports that are accessible to a range of non-specialist audiences, and includes periodic negotiation with both sponsors and program participants.

In addition, Simons (1971) recommends to researchers of case studies of innovation within schooling contexts that since “the aims and purposes of the program developers are not necessarily shared by the users” (p. 121), the findings should record “accurate reports of the judgements, convergent or divergent” (p. 122) for the inquiry to have merit. Furthering this line of thinking, Smith (1995) insists that in the writing of the case report, information needs to be phrased skillfully to be “acceptable to the host organization” whilst also retaining the “integrity of the researcher’s judgment” (p. 6).

The researcher therefore:

(a) Assumed a democratic approach throughout the inquiry, as this best fitted the socio-political climate of the educational milieu in which the investigation took place
(b) Provided accurate reports of findings regardless of orientation
(c) Ensured report phraseology was accessible and acceptable whilst honouring research findings.

4.4 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

Approval to undertake the research was sought from the Deakin University Human Research Ethics Committee (DUHREC) and granted on June 19, 2013 (see Appendix 7). Permission was also sought and granted from the Director of the denominational education system of which the College is a member organisation and from the College Principal, as this followed the mandated process for seeking approval to conduct research within this system of schools. Appendix 8 evidences the Director’s approval for the research to proceed and Appendix 9 contains both the Plain Language Statement and Organisational Consent Form emailed to and signed by the Principal.
4.4.1 Project Participants

The two categories of participants in the inquiry were students from Years 7-12 and Learning Mentors.

Recruitment of Project Participants

Since the study was a single and not multiple-case design, sampling rather than replication logic was followed. In order to strengthen the sampling process, the researcher invited all members of each stakeholder group to contribute to the inquiry. It was anticipated that the resultant participatory group would be significant, consist of “vertical slices of informants” (Smith 1995, p. 6), and reflect the plurality of interest groups connected directly to the Learning Mentor Program, the program of interest in this investigation.

Students and Learning Mentors were informed of the nature of the research project through the College newsletter, which is emailed to College staff and family homes on a fortnightly basis. Potential participants were invited to contribute to the investigation through one of the following data gathering instruments (see Appendix 10):

- Students: Online questionnaire or focus group
- Learning Mentors: Online questionnaire or semi-structured interview

A copy of the Plain Language Statement for the student participatory group was attached to the email, along with the Consent Form for student focus groups (see Appendix 11). It is to be noted that parents were not able to give consent on behalf of their son/daughter to participate in a focus group. The Plain Language Statement for Learning Mentors and the Consent Form for semi-structured interviews was emailed to all staff via a bulk email (see Appendix 12). Signed, completed Consent Forms were returned to either the Student Focus Group Consent Form locked mail box at student reception, or to the Learning Mentor Semi-structured Interview Consent Form locked mail box in the staff lunch room, depending on the participatory category.

Because the questionnaires were online, a paper consent form was not required from participants as completion and submission of the questionnaire, including the anonymous declaration at the start of the document, signified consent. Both the
students and Learning Mentors accessed the online questionnaire through the College intranet.

Contribution to the study through one instrument only was intentionally built into the design to alleviate time constraints that could be placed on the researcher to potentially conduct large numbers of focus groups or interviews when working full-time in a senior leadership role at the site. It also facilitated a more timely collection of data across both respondent groups within the same year. Since the questionnaires could be accessed on or off site and only involved the respondent, they did not present any limitations to the collection process.

**Project Participants by Category: Students**

At the time of data collection, the total student enrolment at the College was 1,104 students - 51% female and 49% male (see Table 4-1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Participants</th>
<th>Year Level</th>
<th>No. Students in Year Level</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,104</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>561 (51%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Participation Rate Data: Student Online Questionnaire**

Six hundred and fifty-seven students completed the online questionnaire, which equated to 59.5% of the total school enrolment. In terms of gender, 56% of the participants were female and 44% male (see Table 4-2) and these proportions do not deviate substantially from the school enrolment gender data (see Table 4-1). All student online questionnaire data were collected during Term 4, 2013 (October 7-November 15).
Table 4-2: Online Questionnaire Student Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Participants</th>
<th>Year Level</th>
<th>No. of Participants</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td>657 (100%)</td>
<td>370 (56%)</td>
<td>287 (44%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participation Rate Data: Student Focus Group

As a total of five students nominated to participate in a Student Focus Group, only one group was convened. The five students were all Year 11 female students who had not participated in the online questionnaire.

In summary, the total number of students that participated in the inquiry was 662 (60% of enrolments), with 657 completing the Online Questionnaire and 5 participating in the Focus Group Session.

Project Participants by Category: Learning Mentors

Eighty-nine Learning Mentors staffed the College’s six Learning Communities in 2013. Of the 88 Mentors eligible to participate in the study (researcher removed), 74 (84%) were employed at the College in teaching roles and 14 (16%) in non-teaching roles.

Participation Rate Data: Learning Mentor Online Questionnaire

A total of 58 Learning Mentors participated in the online questionnaire, which equated to 66% of the eligible mentor cohort. This participatory group was also subdivided into the following categories in preparation for analysis:

- Teacher and non-teacher Learning Mentors
- Teacher mentors in a leadership role and teacher mentors not in a leadership role
• Teacher mentors with \( \leq 10 \) years of experience and teacher mentors with \( > 10 \) years of experience

These mentor data categories are summarised in Table 4-3, Table 4-4 and Table 4-5.

**Table 4-3: Teacher/Non-Teacher Learning Mentor Questionnaire Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentor Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Mentors</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Teacher Mentors</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>58</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4-4: Teacher Mentors: Leadership Role/No Leadership Role Questionnaire Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Mentors</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Role</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Leadership Role</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4-5: Teacher Mentors \( \leq 10 \) years experience/Teacher Mentors \( > 10 \) years experience Questionnaire Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentor Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Mentors ( \leq 10 ) years experience</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Mentors ( &gt; 10 ) years experience</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All Learning Mentor online questionnaire data were collected during Weeks 2 to 5 of Term 4, 2013 (October 14 - November 8).
Participation Rate Data: Learning Mentor Semi-structured Interview

Ten Learning Mentors participated in the inquiry through a semi-structured interview. The composition of this participatory group is displayed in Table 4-6.

Table 4-6: Learning Mentor Semi-structured Interview Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentor Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Mentors (Leadership Position)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Mentors (No Leadership Position)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Teacher Mentors</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, the total number of Learning Mentors participating in the inquiry was 68 (77% of the eligible mentor cohort), with 58 completing the online questionnaire and 10 participating in a semi-structured interview. It is also important to note that all 14 non-teaching Learning Mentors contributed - 12 by questionnaire and 2 by semi-structured interview.

A summary of the percentage of all project participants from each category is displayed in Table 4-7.

Table 4-7: Summary of Project Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Category</th>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% of Cohort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Online Questionnaire</td>
<td>657</td>
<td>662</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus Group</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Mentors</td>
<td>Online Questionnaire</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Number of Participants (Students + Learning Mentors) = 730
**Minimising Participant Coercion**

Because the researcher occupied a senior leadership position at the research site at the time of data collection, the following safeguards were built into the research design to minimise coercion:

(a) The online questionnaire for both participatory groups was anonymous, therefore the researcher did not know who had or had not participated.

(b) The researcher did not recruit participants to the *Student Focus Group* session that she had taught or mentored in order to decrease the potential for perceived coercion among this more vulnerable group.

Both participatory groups’ *Plain Language Statements* included a statement that clearly indicated the inquiry was totally independent of the researcher’s professional role within the College and therefore there was no obligation to participate.

### 4.4.2 Data Gathering Methods

Yin (2014) argues that “a major strength of case study data collection is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence” (p. 119), which is acknowledged as enhancing data credibility and therefore the trustworthiness of an inquiry. It is through the braiding of the data strands that a greater sense of the case is promoted (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Data for this study was gathered using the following three strategies: qualitative online questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and a student focus group. An overview of the use of each method and justification for its use in this inquiry follows.

**1. Online Questionnaires**

Hancock and Algozzine (2011, p. 57) proffer that “instruments created by the researcher … provide a powerful means for collecting information pertaining to the research questions”, as under these conditions they specifically target the investigation of interest. Questionnaires are an example of such instruments. This type of data gathering device could be considered as a form of interview, but with reduced bias because of the uniform question presentation and the absence of potential influencers from the interviewer’s verbal or visual clues. Other features of
questionnaires are that they have the capacity to capture experiences, understandings and perceptions from a large number of respondents in a relatively short period of time and within an anonymous frame. As such, it can be argued that questionnaires are “an essential source of case study evidence because most case studies are about human affairs or actions” (Yin 2014, p. 113). Due to the nature of this inquiry and the respondent groups identified, the use of online questionnaires to capture data from potentially large and diverse respondent groups is therefore justified.

Online questionnaires were developed by the researcher for both stakeholder groups, i.e. students (see Appendix 13) and Learning Mentors (see Appendix 14). The items on the questionnaires were developed and organised into the three thematic bands of Program Infrastructure and Processes, Relationship Development and Program Impact to directly inform the research questions. An additional thematic band in the mentor questionnaire focussed on the role of the Learning Mentor within the Program. Items within the band/s on both instruments were a combination of both closed and open-response formats. The closed components consisted of a mix of Likert-type items with a 5-point response scale and categorical response items. The latter were used to identify the status of the respondents and included items such as gender and respondent grouping. The open-response items were included to allow the participant to offer an opinion or viewpoint that was not influenced by the bias that may be potentially imposed by a closed question.

Across both questionnaires, there were a number of common closed-response questions. This was an intentional strategy employed by the researcher to evidence (where possible) convergent or divergent experiences and/or opinions within and across cohorts on particular aspects of the Learning Mentor Program. All 8 closed Program Infrastructure and Processes questions were identical on both instruments, as were the 14 closed Program Impact questions. Within the Relationship Development thematic band, a total of 4 items aligned across the instruments. Both stakeholder group’s questionnaires concluded with this open response item: ‘Any other comments you would like to make about the Learning Mentor Program at the College?’
The positioning of this question was intentional, allowing the researcher to establish some level of trust with participants through the other items before opening the way for a potentially broader conversation with this question.

Each instrument also carried a number of items specific to the respondent cohort and this is particularly evident in the Learning Mentor closed-question strand focusing on mentor role, and in the open-ended response category of both questionnaires. Employment of similar and dissimilar questions and format strategies within and across participatory cohorts were utilised to remove the risk of eliciting a particular set of responses from the instrument, which also assisted in establishing the trustworthiness of the investigation.

SurveyMonkey software was used to create the online instruments for both stakeholder groups. In addition, Microsoft Excel spreadsheets were utilised to manage and store all open-ended response data after completion of the questionnaires.

Whilst the questionnaires were not modeled on previously trialled instruments, the wording and language level of each item was taken into account in their design in order to minimise any weaknesses and content bias, and to maximise relevancy. For each of the three instruments, the researcher also carefully considered the position of a question within the sequence of others to avoid influence from preceding items. It is to be noted however that students across the six Year Levels still experienced confusion on the intent of open-ended Question 22 (What have you learnt about yourself as a result of your relationship with your Learning Mentor?), which was also interpreted as: What have I learnt about my Learning Mentor as a result of the Mentor/Mentee relationship?

The researcher tallied the intent of both sets of responses in the questionnaire results, but due to this finding clarified the original intent of the question when undertaking the student focus group interview.

In order to avoid design error, feedback was sought from a sample of four Learning Community Leaders and four Learning Mentors on the following features of both the Learning Mentor and Student questionnaires:
- Overall readability of the instruments, i.e. appropriate level of text complexity
- Relevance of the questions to the Learning Mentor Program and to the participatory group
- Degree to which question intent was understood

Students also contributed similar feedback, but specifically on the Student Questionnaire. One student from each of the six Year Levels participated in the process, having been identified by the English Key Learning Area Leader as a typical cohort representative. All suggestions delivered through the feedback were considered, with only minor adjustments needing to be made to the instruments prior to their administration.

Online questionnaires were chosen for use in this study because they are an effective data-gathering instrument, have the capacity to access respondents in situ, facilitate the direct entry of data, achieve quick returns and do not require specialised software. As noted earlier, it has been argued that a carefully constructed questionnaire is the textual form of a structured interview, and this was evidenced in the data from both stakeholder groups in this inquiry.

2. Semi-structured Interviews

Yin (2014) argues that interviews are “one of the most important sources of case study evidence” (p. 110) because “well-informed interviewees can provide important insights … (as well as) shortcuts to the prior history” (p. 108) of the selected case. They offer a balance between a focused structured questionnaire and an open-ended interview and in doing so can potentially uncover rich descriptive data on the experiences of participants through the conversational trajectories. This data collection strategy therefore aligns with case study methodology. The option of participating in a semi-structured interview was offered to Learning Mentors both because of their availability to the researcher during the course of a normal school day (including before and after school, therefore reducing interview scheduling pressures) and to provide an alternative data collection method that could potentially capture other insights not directly influenced by the question style and open-ended response cues on the online questionnaire.

All ten interviews were conducted at the research site in a small, quiet meeting room within the Year 12 learning, teaching and study facility managed by the researcher in
her role as Senior Learning and Teaching Leader. The interviews took place at a time that was mutually agreeable to both the mentor and the researcher, with most interviews occurring in non-scheduled face-to-face teaching time in preference to before or after school hours.

Each interview commenced with a welcome, followed by a brief overview of the interview process. The overview included a reminder that the interview would be audio-taped and then transcribed, with a copy of the transcript made available to the interviewee to review, edit or remove their contribution before aggregation of the information.

Interview length ranged from 10 to 25 minutes and was recorded on two separate devices: a Sony ICD-PX820 and an Olympus VN-712PC. The dual recording was undertaken to ensure an audio back-up in the event of a device failure. Each audio was recorded in MP3 format and then transferred to a password-protected computer using iTunes. The files were then emailed to an interstate transcription service for confidential digital transcription. On return of the transcripts by email, the researcher checked and then forwarded the relevant document to each interviewee for verification of content and/or an opportunity to change or withdraw text. All ten interviewees were in agreement with the contents of the documentation, and so no amendments were necessary. Both the interviewer and interviewee were allocated titles of Facilitator and Interviewee in each of the transcribed scripts to preserve anonymity. The researcher re-titled each Microsoft Word document transcript stored in her computer with a number to identify the sequence of interviews, with Interview 1 being the first and Interview 10 the last. The transcription service only retained the audio files uploaded by the researcher for a 2-week period after the return of each transcript. Copies of the audio files were maintained by the researcher in data files on her password-protected computer. Direct quotations from interviewees were only included in the research findings where consent was given.

Data gathering of this form was used in the study as it enabled the researcher to pursue more deeply responses of particular interest as they arose, thus uncovering views not otherwise anticipated. In addition, it allowed the respondents to clarify question intent, challenge the set agenda, collect non-verbal data through observation, and raise additional issues of relevance. Because of the inherent
flexibility in the method, the researcher employed the following to secure the trustworthiness of the data across the interviews:

(a) A protocol was developed to guide the introduction, the body of the interview and concluding dialogue
(b) A common set of interview questions, aligned to the questionnaire items and their categories but open to other insights, was delivered in a standardised way within and across interviews
(c) Note-taking was utilised in each interview to record significant non-verbal data
(d) A conscious attempt was made to avoid the use of signals or cues

In addition, throughout each interview the researcher focussed on ensuring the respondent’s viewpoint was captured as intended whilst building positive rapport.

3. Focus Group

Powell and Single (1996, p. 499) define a focus group as a “group of individuals assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on, from personal experience, the topic that is the subject of the research”, which in this study is the Learning Mentor Program. They are cited in the literature as potential forums for change and agents of empowerment. A focus group differs from group interviewing in that it relies on the interaction between participants in preference to the interaction between the researcher and the participants, and this is why this conversational data collection method was particularly selected as an option for the student cohort. The focus group procedure makes a deliberate attempt to “surface the views of each person in the group” (Krueger & Casey, 2009, cited in Yin, 2009, p. 112), and to capture each member’s “own sense of reality” (Yin, 2009, p. 122) thus providing the researcher with access to comparisons that the participants may make between their experiences, be that through consensus or diversity of thought. The potential for evoking this level of multi-layered responses in situ is not available in the other methods selected for this study.

As noted earlier in Project Participants, the focus group formed in this study consisted of five Year 11 female students. Students gathered during a lunch break (negotiated with the participants) in a private meeting room in a staff-only venue at the research site. The focus group discussion did not exceed 40 minutes and lunch was provided.
Similar to the semi-structured interview protocol, this forum commenced with a welcome, followed by an overview of the process to be followed. The following reminders were also included in the opening brief:

- The focus group discussion would be audio taped and then transcribed by an interstate transcription service
- Participating students would not be identified by name but rather by the anonymous code of Interviewee in the resulting transcript
- Withdrawal from the focus group after the discussion would not enable withdrawal of that individual’s voice, as this would make the responses collected meaningless because of the nature of discussion groups
- All participants would be given an opportunity to read the transcript of their focus group discussion should they wish to do so.

The audio recording devices used in the Learning Mentor semi-structured interview sessions were also used to capture the focus group discussion. In addition, identical audio file transfer, storage and transcription procedures were followed. After the transcription of the file, the researcher allocated a numeral to each Interviewee code (e.g. Interviewee 1) to discriminate between contributors as this had not been provided on the script. Three of the five participants took up the opportunity to read the transcript of the focus group discussion on its return. Direct quotations from participants were only included in the research findings where consent was given in writing.

Eight (8) questions with an open-ended format were developed by the researcher for use in the forum. The questions, aligned to the themes of the questionnaire items, were ordered to ensure a logical flow and were specifically designed to promote discussion. Prompts to facilitate discussion and cues to further probe an area of interest were also developed for each question in the event they were needed.

At the beginning of the discussion the researcher attempted to use notetaking to capture significant non-verbal data, but this was later abandoned to focus more intently on the student contributions and the new paths they were mapping through the dialogue.
Focus groups were selected as a data collection method in this inquiry as they aligned with case study methodology and complemented the other data gathering techniques for triangulatory purposes.

Potential reasons for the study not attracting more candidates to a focus group forum are detailed later in the chapter under Problems Encountered in Producing Data.

Data Collection and Schools

The practicalities of data collection in schools is often cited as a potential challenge for researchers due to timetabling constraints and the likelihood of unforeseen absences on designated data collection days. However, since there was also the opportunity for all students and Learning Mentors to access the online questionnaires during Learning Mentor Program time if so desired, data collection challenges were minimized throughout the designated collection periods. The common weekly scheduling of the Learning Mentor Program time for all mentors and mentees thus offered in-school time to participate in the inquiry via the online questionnaire, and this further enabled an efficient and timely data collection process.

4.4.3 Triangulation of the Data

Case Study is regarded as a triangulated research strategy, which “arises from the ethical need to confirm the validity of the processes” (Tellis 1997, p. 2). The intent of triangulation is to “use two or more aspects of research to strengthen the design to increase the ability to interpret the findings” (Thurmond 2001, p. 253). Whilst triangulation can apply to theories, investigators, methods and data sources (Denzin 1978), it was extended only to the latter two in this study.

Method Triangulation

As detailed earlier in 4.4.2, data were collected through online questionnaires from both stakeholder groups, Learning Mentor interviews and a student focus group. The combination of techniques allowed for a form of intra-triangulation to occur in the analysis of the both the Learning Mentor and student data to create more focussed inquiry outcomes, facilitated by highly similar interview and focus group prompts and questionnaire items.
Criticisms of the employment of data gathering method triangulation include the assumptions that:

1. The methods are equivalent in terms of their capacity to yield information that is both useful and relevant to the study
2. Biases are equitable across data gathering methods
3. Numerical and narrative data can consistently converge
4. The strategy compensates for poorly designed and poorly conducted investigations
5. The strategy has the capacity to confer additional validity beyond that which is already inherent in the study design
6. Complete knowledge of a phenomenon is possible

Additional criticisms also identified in the literature are the increased quantity of data produced as a result of this mode of triangulation, and therefore the demand for an increased investment in the time needed for analysis by the researcher.

However advocates agree that the strategy allows the researcher to create mixed/innovative ways of seeing and understanding a phenomenon and in doing so both mobilise and “clarify meaning” (Stake 2000, p. 443) more efficiently. Also, it is proposed that triangulation of this form can:

(a) Confirm what is happening by using the same set of research questions across multiple data gathering instruments with the explicit purpose of exposing converging lines of inquiry (Yin 2014, p. 120).

(b) “Decrease the deficiencies and biases” (Mitchell 1986, p. 19) that stem from the influence of any single data source

(c) Increase the credibility and therefore the trustworthiness of the findings of a qualitative investigation

(d) Successfully converge numerical and narrative contributions where complementarity between evidence sets exists.

Finally, it is argued that the strategy has the capacity to identify significant individual cases that sit as outliers to the aggregated data set, and this contributes to the comprehensiveness of the findings.
To further enable complementary yet distinct results to emerge through the investigation, data collection points were separated by a short time period and participant responses were anchored to the context of the Program (Harris & Brown 2010).

*Data Source Triangulation*

It is also accepted that both informant groups (students and Learning Mentors) could potentially report biased outcomes for a variety of reasons, and so triangulation of the data source was also appropriate in this investigation since it facilitated the mapping of consistencies through the examination of “multiple perspectives on an outcome” (Grossman 2005), and not the consistency within respondent groupings. Verification of the viewpoints and experiences of both stakeholder groups assisted to create a landscape of each cohort’s attitudes, needs and behaviour and enhanced the contextual data relating to the research site.

A more robust research design resulting in the production of rich and relevant data that captures the complexity of the study resulted from the employment of both method and data source triangulation in this investigation.

4.4.4 *Data Analysis*

*Questionnaire Open-ended Response Items, Semi-structured Interviews and Focus Group*

In this study, a thematic analytical approach was utilised to examine all questionnaire open-ended response data and semi-structured interview and focus group transcripts. This method of analysis provided a systematic way of identifying and then coding the commonality of themes and patterns of experience presented by the respondents through these data collection techniques.

Boyatzis (1998, p. 161) defines a theme as being “a pattern in the information that at minimum describes and organizes the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon”. More simply it has been described as a cluster of linked categories conveying similar meanings (Holloway 1997). Thematic analysis is a highly inductive method as the themes emerge from the data in preference to being imposed by the researcher (Dawson 2005). It also displays theoretical flexibility since “the search for and examination of patterning across
language does not require adherence to any particular theory of language or explanatory meaning framework for human beings, experiences or practices” (Clarke & Braun 2013, p. 120). Another feature of thematic analysis is that collection and analysis of the data occur simultaneously and it is suited to analysing data particularly from questionnaires, interviews and focus groups – the three methods utilised in this inquiry.

The researcher essentially adopted Aronson’s (1994) approach to the development of themes for the study. Therefore, after the collection of the data sets identified earlier, the following sequence of events occurred:

(a) Patterns of experience were identified
(b) Data were fitted to a pattern
(c) Related patterns were combined and catalogued into sub-themes
(d) Theme statements were formed and interwoven with the literature
(e) New knowledge emerging from the identification of the themes or sub-themes were systematically recorded.

Following this process brought together “components or fragments of ideas or experiences, which are often meaningless when viewed alone” (Leininger 1985, p. 60) but when pieced together form a “comprehensive picture of (a) collective experience” (Aronson 1994, p. 1). Clearly the number of themed statements resulting from employment of the process cannot be predetermined, and this further defines the exploratory power of the tool.

**Closed-response Questionnaire Items**

Thematic analysis was also employed to analyse the closed-response items within each of the questionnaires. The closed-response items required the selection of a Likert scale response option. Since it is recognised that statistics such as means and standard deviations have blurred meanings when applied to response data of this type, percentages of responses to each scale category (i.e. percentage frequencies) were used to identify the patterns of experience for the analysis.

In order to ascertain whether trends existed within and/or across stakeholder groups, the percentage response data were organised in the following way:
1) Students
   (a) Individual Year Levels (Years 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12)
   (b) Individual Year Level Gender Groups (Years 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12)

2) Learning Mentors
   (a) All Learning Mentors
   (b) Category of Learning Mentor – Teacher or Non-teacher
   (c) Category of Learning Mentor – Occupies leadership role or no leadership role
   (d) Category of Learning Mentor – 0-10 or more than 10 years teaching experience.

Response trends were identified from these data sorts and included both the similarities, differences and priorities of experience both within and across participatory cohorts.

The principal role of any researcher is to make what is implicit in the data explicit and in doing so unearth new understandings, and this is why thematic analysis has been employed as the method of data analysis in this case. The Case Study research must also be sufficiently comprehensive (Tripp 1985) so that what is unique to a case and what is common to all cases is clearly delineated. As Stake (cited in Denzin and Lincoln 2003, p. 435) proffers, “the methods of the qualitative case study are largely the methods of disciplining (a) personal and particularised experience” and this was the intent of this inquiry.

4.5 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN PRODUCING DATA

A number of problems were encountered producing the data.

Firstly, a 5-point Likert scale was used on each stakeholder group’s online questionnaire to capture the intensity of belief about a particular aspect of the Learning Mentor Program. After a preliminary raw score analysis of the response data across the questionnaires however, the Likert scale was treated to further reduction. The researcher realises that whilst some analytical detail has been lost through the collapsing of categories, it facilitated a clearer identification of the general response patterns that lay on either side of the neutral option for each cohort.
The adjustment involved aggregating the scale categories into the following three classes:

- Agree = Strongly Agree + Agree
- Uncertain
- Disagree = Strongly Disagree + Disagree

In summary, the administered 5-point scale was analysed as a 3-point scale in order to reveal more defining trends both within and across the stakeholder groups and in doing so clarify rather than obscure the general intent of respondent cohorts. There is recognition however that in employing this strategy, equality of interval data is lost thereby reducing the “sensitivity of the measurement” and “normalcy of response distribution” (Grimbeek, Bryer, Beamish & D’Netto 2005, p. 127).

Secondly, across both categories of respondents, 716 participants completed an online questionnaire. Within each of the questionnaires were 5 open-ended response questions. Collating and theming the student open-ended response questions in particular was quite time consuming, as this required the reading and analysis of over 3,000 responses.

A further problem was that the Student Focus Group attracted only five Year 11 female students from across the six Year Levels. The small number of students choosing this option may have been due to a number of reasons:

- Focus groups being advertised in the Student Plain Language Statement to take place during a lunch break (where lunch was provided) for 40 minutes. The timing of these sessions may have competed with other school-based sporting, cultural or academic support activities on offer during this formal break.
- Students being inexperienced in participating in such groups, and thus unsure of what to expect beyond the detail provided in the Student Plain Language Statement.
- The combinations of Year Levels in the four focus groups may have deterred students who are more comfortable working in single Year Level forums. The four groups advertised were: paired Year Level groupings of Year 7 and 8 students only, Year 9 and 10 students only or Year 11 and 12 students only; or a mixed group of Year 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 students.
• Students realising, after reading the *Student Plain Language Statement*, that the sharing of opinions in a focus group may put an individual’s privacy at risk, whereas the online questionnaire provided an anonymous environment in which to register voice.

• The requirement to keep the nature of the discussion and individuals’ contributions within a focus group confidential may have been interpreted as a constraint for potential participants, and therefore it may have lessened the attractiveness of this option.

• The ability to complete the online questionnaire at any time during the 6-week designated data collection block (October 7, 2013 to November 15, 2013) via the given link. This flexibility for participation in terms of timing and site options were obviously not available to students in the focus group schedule because of the nature of this data collection method.

• Students could access the online questionnaire earlier than a focus group session and since participation was limited to one data collection method only, timing may have influenced participation rates in both collection techniques.

• An individuals’ personal preference to complete an anonymous online questionnaire over an open and recorded conversation.

• Any combination of the above.

The researcher recognises that focus groups are more flexible than questionnaires and that is why they were offered to potential participants as an alternative to the online instrument. They allow not only for question clarification but also for follow-up questions to explore vague or unexpected responses. In addition, through the face-to-face engagement, the interviewer has the potential to motivate the participants to reveal a wealth of information not typically captured by a static data collection technique. The researcher therefore acknowledges that the inquiry could have been potentially enhanced if at least the four intended student focus groups had been able to be formed; however, this was not the case (potentially for the reasons listed), and the one focus group that did form was neither gender-balanced or have membership from two or more Year Levels.

It is also to be noted that the data collection period was purposely scheduled toward the end of the academic year to capture students’ experience of the Program for at least one year (Year 7 cohort). If additional focus groups had been assembled after...
the assigned data collection period, Year 12 would not have been able to participate as they had exited the College, and Year 10 and Year 11 would have been involved in an internal examination period, only being on site for scheduled exams. In addition, early in 2014, the researcher accepted a position in another State and Diocese, so accessibility to the informant groups was no longer available even if the data collection period had been extended into the following year.

4.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter of the thesis presents and justifies the design of an illuminative case study inquiry situated within an interpretivist frame, developed to investigate the experiences of students and mentors in a purpose-built school-based Learning Mentor Program delivered through a whole-school approach in a regional Year 7-12 Australian secondary school. The explicit intent of the study was to identify through stakeholder experience those factors that most influence outcomes in such environments in order to inform the broader context of school-based mentoring schemes.

As detailed in Table 4-7: Summary of Project Participants, response rates to the online questionnaires were substantially higher than the response rates to the other data collection methods utilised in the study. In total, 716 online questionnaires were accessed and completed by individuals from the two participating cohorts – 657 submitted by students and 59 by Learning Mentors. The response rates by both groups were particularly significant, thus enabling their results to be confidently generalised as representative of their respective cohorts. In this inquiry, whilst there is a justifiable reliance on the data collected through questionnaires to inform inquiry outcomes, the contributions from all methods were used to establish and consolidate the trustworthiness of the results.

The following two chapters present the findings mapped from the data collection methods detailed in this chapter. Chapter 5 is devoted to the student participatory cohort and Chapter 6 to the Learning Mentor cohort.
CHAPTER 5 RESEARCH FINDINGS: STUDENTS

The findings from this case study are presented across two chapters. Chapter 5 details the students’ experience of a whole school approach to mentoring through a school-based Learning Mentor Program in terms of program infrastructure and processes, relationship development and program impact. Chapter 6 details mentor experience of the Program through the same three thematic lenses and also through the additional one of mentor role.

ORGANISATION OF THE CHAPTER

There are three defined sections to this chapter. The first section maps the findings from the closed response items of the anonymous online questionnaire (see Appendix 13), under the three lenses identified earlier. Since Questions 1-3 required consent to participate and gender and Year Level identification, the findings commence with Questions 4-9. All closed-response item data were collated as Year Level data (see Appendix 15) and then as Year Level Gender data (see Appendix 16) in order to identify any trends emerging from within and/or across student groupings.

The second section of the chapter maps the findings from the thematic analysis of the open-ended response items from the same data gathering instrument (see Appendix 17). The questionnaire was completed by 657 students (370 female and 287 male), representing 59.5% of the total school enrolment.

The final section of the chapter reports findings from the student focus group which consisted of five Year 11 female students. Eight questions with an open-ended format were developed for use in this forum and are detailed in 5.3.

The chapter concludes with an overall summary of the key findings emanating from the data sets.

5.1 SECTION 1: QUESTIONNAIRE CLOSED RESPONSE ITEM FINDINGS

The questionnaire consisted of 32 closed Likert-type response items intentionally grouped into thematic categories by the researcher through question sequence. These
categories were not identified on the questionnaire. What follows are the findings from the closed response items tabled by theme, and examined through the dual lenses of Year Level and Gender.

5.1.1 **Theme 1: Program Infrastructure and Processes**

This theme focussed on capturing students’ understandings and experiences of the following organisational elements of the Learning Mentor Program:

(a) Aims
(b) Structural frame
(c) Time allocation
(d) Activities and content
(e) Met student expectations

**Year Level Data Trends**

In order to identify the existence of any Year Level trends, agreement response rates i.e. agree + strongly agree for each question were calculated, and these data are presented in Table 5-1. In addition, colour is assigned to both the lowest and highest agreement response rates given to a question by a Year Level, and agreement response rates equal to or greater than 60% are bolded in red.

Questions 10 and 11 are not included in Table 5-1 as these data are summarised in the responses to *adequate time is allocated to the Learning Mentor Program* (Question 9).
The Learning Mentor Program has ... | Agreement Response Rate (%) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yr 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Clear aims</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Met my expectations</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Sound structure: Learning Communities and LMGs</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Right mix of learning and community activities</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Interesting and relevant activities/content in LMP</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Adequate time is allocated to the LPR</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key

- Highest % Agreement Rate
- Lowest % Agreement Rate

LMG = Learning Mentor Group
LMP = Learning Mentor Period
LPR = Learning Mentor Program

An agreement response trend also presented across Year Levels with regards to clarity of Program Aims, and this is summarised in Table 5-2.

Table 5-2: Years 7-12 Agreement Response Trend: Program Infrastructure and Processes

The Learning Mentor Program has clear aims ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Level</th>
<th>Agreement (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Magnitude of Change = 44%

Observations from the Data: Program Infrastructure and Processes: Year Level Trends

(a) The Learning Mentor Program’s organisational structure of six Learning Communities further subdivided into Learning Mentor Groups was the
Program feature that attracted the highest agreement response rate from all six Year Levels, whilst the content and relevance of the sessions delivered in the 72-minute Learning Mentor period attracted the least support (see Table 5-1).

(b) All cohorts supported the amount of time allocated weekly to the Program through the formal scheduling of an 8-minute morning contact session daily and a weekly 72-minute Learning Mentor Period.

(c) Year 7 respondents:
- Registered greater clarity around the aims of the Program than the other cohorts, with level of clarity decreasing from Years 7-12 (see Table 5-2). It is to be noted however that there is a considerable difference between the Year 8-12 clarity of aims agreement rates and the Year 7 rate.
- Recorded the highest agreement levels to all Program infrastructure and process elements listed in Table 5-1.

**Trends Across Gender Groups**

Gender trends were identified in the Years 7-12 male data within the Meeting of Expectations response frequencies, and this trend is presented in Table 5-3.

### Table 5-3: Years 7-12 Male Agreement Response Trend: Program Infrastructure and Processes

The Learning Mentor Program has met my expectations ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Level</th>
<th>Agreement (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Magnitude of Change = 43%

**Observations from the Data: Program Infrastructure and Processes: Trends Across Gender Groups**

Across Years 7-12, male mentees registered decreasing levels of agreement with the following: ‘The Learning Mentor Program has met my expectations’.

There were no evident female gender trends in the data for the same items.
5.1.2 Theme 2: Relationship Development

This theme focused on capturing students’ experience of being mentored within the Program in terms of social and emotional support and learning improvement support.

Year Level Data Trends

As in 5.1.1, agreement response rates (i.e. agree + strongly agree) for each question for Theme 2: Relationship Development have been calculated, and these data are presented in Table 5-4. To identify the patterns that have emerged, a colour has been assigned to both the top and bottom 5 agreement response rates for each Year Level.

Table 5-4: Year Level Agreement Response Rates: Questionnaire Items 12-21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Learning Mentor ....</th>
<th>Agreement Response Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yr 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Knows me well</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Knows how I learn best</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Talks to me about how to improve my learning</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Helps me improve my learning</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Is available for advice and support when I need it</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Has developed a good relationship with me</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Is interested in how I am going at school</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Recognizes my achievements</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Updates parents/guardians on my learning progress</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Has helped me to gain learning confidence</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key**

- Top 5 Agreement Rates
- Bottom 5 Agreement Rates
In addition to these agreement rate trends, an increasing agreement response trend presented across Years 10-12 with regards to *Interest in how the mentee is going at school*, and this is summarised in Table 5-5.

**Table 5-5: Years 10-12 Agreement Response Trend: Relationship Development**

*My Learning Mentor is interested in how I am going at school ...*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Level</th>
<th>Agreement (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Magnitude of Change = 23%*

**Observations from the Data -- Relationship Development: Year Level Trends**

(a) Across all six Year Levels, the following five experiences of being mentored were most recognised by respondents:

The Learning Mentor...
- Knows the mentee
- Gives advice and support to the mentee
- Has developed a good relationship with the mentee
- Is interested in how the mentee is going at school
- Recognizes the mentee’s achievements

Experiences least recognised by all cohorts were:

The Learning Mentor...
- Knows how the mentee learns
- Talks to the mentee about learning improvement
- Helps the mentee improve learning
- Helps the mentee gain learning confidence
- Updates parents on the mentee’s learning progress

These data indicate that all cohorts experienced greater social, emotional and identity support from their mentor rather than support to improve the mentee’s learning outcomes (see Table 5-4).
(b) Year 7 recorded the highest agreement levels to all Relationship elements listed in Table 5-4.

(c) As students’ progress from Years 10-12, there was increasing recognition by mentees of mentor interest in how the mentee was going at school (see Table 5-5).

**Observations from the Data -- Relationship Development: Trends Across Gender Groups**

Gender trends were identified in the Year 10-12 male data within the *Advice and Support* and *Recognition of Mentee Achievement* items, and these are presented in Table 5-6.

**Table 5-6: Years 10-12 Male Agreement Response Trends: Relationship Development**

*My Learning Mentor* ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Level</th>
<th><strong>Agreement (%)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Agreement (%)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is Available for</td>
<td>Recognises Mentee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advice and Support</td>
<td>Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Males</strong></td>
<td><strong>Males</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>65 (Increasing)</td>
<td>54 (Increasing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>92 (Increasing)</td>
<td>60 (Increasing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>93 (Increasing)</td>
<td>80 (Increasing)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Magnitude of Change** = 28%  
**Magnitude of Change** = 26%

**Observations from the Data – Relationship Development: Trends Across Gender Groups**

As males progress from Years 10-12, increasing agreement response rates were reported for the following:

- The Learning Mentor gives advice and support to the mentee (see Table 5-6)
- The Learning Mentor recognises the mentee’s achievements (see Table 5-6)

There were no evident female gender trends in the data for the same items.
5.1.3 Theme 3: Program Impact

This theme focused on capturing students’ experience of the Learning Mentor Program’s effectiveness or impact in supporting and promoting the learning progression and the social and emotional wellbeing of the mentee.

*Year Level Data Trends*

As in Tables 5-1 and 5-4, agreement response rates for each question have been calculated, and these data are presented in Table 5-7. Colour has been assigned to the top three response rates for each Year Level. The bottom four response rates for each group are bolded in red.
Table 5-7: Year Level Agreement Response Rates: Questionnaire Items 24-37

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Impacts</th>
<th>Agreement Response Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yr 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24  LMP - important part of weekly lesson schedule</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25  LMG - caring, supportive and encouraging</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26  I can get help with work from LMG members</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The activities I have completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped me to....

| 27  Understand how I learn best | 65   | 43   | 42   | 41    | 36    | 27    |
| 28  Become a more independent learner | 79   | 56   | 58   | 56    | 51    | 49    |
| 29  Improve my organisational skills | 73   | 47   | 53   | 50    | 40    | 35    |
| 30  Improve grades and test scores | 61   | 43   | 47   | 41    | 35    | 30    |
| 31  Develop better communication skills | 74   | 49   | 54   | 51    | 46    | 47    |
| 32  Develop better teamwork skills | 72   | 44   | 52   | 50    | 42    | 46    |

Because of the Learning Mentor Program....

| 33  I now set learning goals for myself | 59   | 34   | 35   | 36    | 32    | 41    |
| 34  I know how to use different learning strategies | 70   | 44   | 48   | 42    | 37    | 46    |
| 35  I know how to use different problem solving strategies | 61   | 40   | 36   | 40    | 35    | 45    |
| 36  LMP has helped motivate me to improve my learning | 71   | 46   | 51   | 48    | 42    | 35    |

**Key**

- Top 3 Agreement Rates
- LMP = Learning Mentor Period
- LMG = Learning Mentor Group
Observations from the Data – Program Impact: Year Level Trends

(a) The following three (3) Program impacts were most recognised by the Year 7, 8, 9 and 10 cohorts of respondents:

The Learning Mentor Program delivered through designated time allocations -
- Provides an environment of care, support and encouragement
- Is a valued component of a student’s learning schedule
- Enables students to seek assistance from other members of the Learning Mentor Group

Whilst these trends were also reflected in the Year 11-12 data, agreement rates were smaller for this set of cohorts for the latter two experiences.

(b) Year 7 cohort consistently recorded medium to strong levels of agreement for all items in this section of the questionnaire, indicating some link between participating in the Program and progression in the listed area. This was not evident in the data of the other five participating cohorts with agreement response rates considerably lower in areas other than their identified top three ranks.

(c) Impacts least recognised by the Year 7-11 cohorts were:

The Learning Mentor Program supports students to -
- Understand how they best learn
- Improve grades and test scores
- Use different problem solving strategies
- Set learning goals

Impacts least recognised by the Year 12 cohort of respondents were:

The Learning Mentor Program supports students to -
- Improve organisational skills
- Be motivated to improve learning
- Improve grades and test scores
- Understand how they best learn
Overall, these data indicate that all cohorts experienced greater social and emotional support from participating in the mentoring program than support that was directly focussed on the development of defined skills to enhance learning gain.

As in Tables 5-1 and 5-4, agreement response rates for each question have been calculated, and these data are presented in Table 5-7. Colour has been assigned to the top three response rates for each Year Level. The bottom four response rates for each group are bolded in red.

**Observations from the Data – Program Impact: Trends Across Gender Groups**

All gender trends emerging from this thematic band of questions are summarised in Tables 5-8 to 5-10.

**Table 5-8: Years 7-9 Male Agreement Response Trends: Program Impacts**

*The Learning Mentor Program …*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Level</th>
<th>Agreement (%) Helps Students Become More Independent Learners</th>
<th>Agreement (%) Helps Students Use Problem Solving Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Males: 80 Decreasing</td>
<td>Males: 71 Decreasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Males: 62 Decreasing</td>
<td>Males: 57 Decreasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Males: 53 Decreasing</td>
<td>Males: 38 Decreasing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Magnitude of Change**

- Helps Students Become More Independent Learners: = 27%
- Helps Students Use Problem Solving Strategies: = 33%

**Table 5-9: Years 7-9 Female Agreement Response Trends: Program Impacts**

*The Learning Mentor Program …*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Level</th>
<th>Agreement (%) Helps Students Improve Grades and Test Scores</th>
<th>Agreement (%) Helps Students Set Learning Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Females: 60 Decreasing</td>
<td>Females: 62 Decreasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Females: 46 Decreasing</td>
<td>Females: 35 Decreasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Females: 34 Decreasing</td>
<td>Females: 31 Decreasing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Magnitude of Change**

- Helps Students Improve Grades and Test Scores: = 26%
- Helps Students Set Learning Goals: = 31%
The Learning Mentor Program helps students improve communication skills ...

**Observations from the Data – Program Impact: Trends Across Gender Groups**

(a) As male students progress from Years 7-9, there was less recognition of experiencing the following learning outcomes (see Table 5-8):
- Becoming a more independent learner
- Using different problem solving strategies

There were no evident female trends in the data for the same items.

(b) As female students progress from Years 7-9, there was less recognition of experiencing the following (see Table 5-9):
- Improved grades and test scores
- Setting of learning goals

(c) Year 12 males recognised through their agreement response rate that improved communication skills were an outcome from participating in the Program. There was considerably less recognition of this outcome in the Years 8-11 male data (see Table 5-10), which followed the Year Level trends for this questionnaire item. Year 7 males also followed their Year Level trend noted earlier of medium to strong levels of agreement for all items on this section of the questionnaire, and therefore their response rate does not sit as an outlier (see Table 5-7 and Table 5-10).
5.2 SECTION 2: QUESTIONNAIRE OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE ITEM FINDINGS

This section of the chapter maps the findings resulting from the thematic analysis of the following five open-ended response items from the questionnaire:

Table 5-11: Questionnaire Open-ended Response Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quest. No.</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>What have you learnt about yourself as a result of your relationship with your Learning Mentor?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>What is the best thing about having a Learning Mentor?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>What are the best things about the Learning Mentor Program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>What changes (if any) would you make to the Learning Mentor Program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Any other comments you would like to make about the Learning Mentor Program?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Year Level data trends presenting in response to each question follow. They were derived from the Year Level Data Summary Tables for Open-Ended Response Questions (see Appendix 17).

5.2.1 Findings: Question 22: What have you learnt about yourself as a result of your relationship with your learning mentor?

Observations from the Data – Year Level Data Trends

On average, 46% of all Year Level participant groups returned a response of *nothing or don’t know/not sure* to this question. The trends that follow are those that emerged from the remainder of the data for each participatory cohort.

The following five response categories presented across the data sets:

1. Recognition of mentor help and support
2. Increased self-efficacy
3. Personal attributes
4. Improvement areas/Challenges
5. Personal learning and working style
(a) *Years 7, 8 and 9*

The most frequently tabled response categories from students in Years 7, 8 and 9 were *recognition of mentor help and support* and *increased self-efficacy* (see Appendix 17, Table 1). Whilst the former category is technically not about self-learning, it was one of the prevailing themes and so it is included as a response field. Examples of student voice from each area include:

*On Recognition of Mentor Help and Support*

I have learnt that I can tell my Learning Mentor a lot. Also that I can trust them to help me with my problems or my work when I need it. (*Year 7 Female*)

*On Increased Self-Efficacy*

I have learnt that when I set my mind to something, I can achieve it. I have more belief in myself now and that's because of the great relationship I have with my Learning Mentor. I feel very comfortable with her and that has helped me do my best. (*Year 9 Female*)

Weaker responses rates presented for the *personal attributes*, *improvement areas/challenges* and *personal learning and working styles* categories across the same three cohorts. Examples of responses from these areas include:

*On Personal Attributes*

I have learnt that I am a hard worker and that I focus well in class. (*Year 7 Male*)

*On Improvement Areas/Challenges*

I have learnt one or two things I could work on from looking at my report with my Learning Mentor. I don’t always have good time management either. (*Year 8 Male*)
On Personal Learning and Working Styles

I have learnt that I work best independently and learn best when things are written. I have also learnt that I do my best work when I revise and am more organised when I prioritise my work. (Year 8 Female)

In summary, the findings support that for Year 7, 8 and 9 mentees there is some connection between the development of a trusting mentee/mentor relationship and increased mentee confidence in their ability to achieve in both learning and personal settings.

(b) Years 10, 11 and 12

The most frequently tabled response categories from students in Years 10, 11 and 12 were recognition of mentor help and support and personal attributes, although response returns in general were low (see Appendix 17, Table 1). Examples of student voice from these categories include:

On Recognition of Mentor Help and Support

My Learning Mentor is like a friend who I can rely on when I need help. (Year 10 Male)

My Learning Mentor has allowed me to more easily identify the areas where I should focus my time and energy in order to achieve the best results possible. His constant support and encouragement has allowed me to recognise my strengths and feel empowered to work on my weaknesses. (Year 11 Female)

On Personal Attributes

I have learnt that I am a loving person and get along with people. (Year 10 Female)

I have learnt that I am a leader and the younger ones tend to look up to me. (Year 12 Male)
Whilst the remaining three categories of responses were represented in the data, the rates were much weaker than the previously identified top two, with little difference between rates for the three lower ranked areas within each Year Level.

5.2.2 Findings: Question 23: What is the best thing about having a Learning Mentor?

There were two distinct interpretations of this question. One focussed on the Learning Mentor and the other on the Learning Mentor Program. In order to capture all student voice within the inquiry in their appropriate contexts, data referring to aspects of the Program have been included in the response data to Question 38: What are the best things about the Learning Mentor Program?

Observations from the Data: Year Level Data Trends

The following four broad categories of responses emerged from each of the six participating cohort’s data in response to ‘What is the best thing about having a Learning Mentor?’

1. Social and Emotional Support
2. Learning Support
3. Not sure/don’t know
4. Organisational/Administrative Support

Years 7-12

The most frequently tabled response categories from students in each of these Year Levels were the provision of social and emotional support followed by learning support (see Appendix 17, Table 2). Examples of student voice from each field include:

On Social and Emotional Support

The best thing about having a Learning Mentor is that they care about me and ask me how I am feeling and they give me advice on what I need to work on. They are someone to talk to about my problems. (Year 7 Female)
Always having someone there to talk to when we are in need and lost. They want the best for you and know more about me than any other teacher. *(Year 8 Male)*

Having someone you can talk to openly knowing they won’t judge you. You build a relationship and friendship with them. I actually feel my Learning Mentor walks beside me …. helping me. *(Year 9 Female)*

Having a teacher to go to for help with anything and someone to trust and talk to about any issue. *(Year 10 Male)*

It allows me to know that there is always one person who is willing to talk and is open to conversation about anything that may be going on at school or even outside of school. My LM is someone who is always very approachable. *(Year 11 Male)*

The best thing about my Learning Mentor is that he is willing to listen to me and sought out any dramas at school. He acts as part of my support network. *(Year 12 Female)*

*On Learning Support*

I think the best thing about having a learning mentor is that if I am struggling with my work I can always go and ask for help. They help me with my learning. *(Year 7 Male)*

They help you with schoolwork during Learning Mentor time and with tasks due in by next week or the week after. *(Year 8 Female)*

Someone who is always there to help you with your work and check on how I am going in my subjects. You can approach them for help on assignments or homework. *(Year 9 Male)*

My Learning Mentor has helped me to know what I’m doing well at and what I need to improve – so they have helped me with my learning. They also offer an unbiased view of how I am going at school. *(Year 10 Female)*
I can always go to my Learning Mentor when I have questions about school or I need help with work. It is good they check my progress too. *(Year 11 Female)*

My Learning Mentor takes interest in my progress and schoolwork, where my parents sometimes don't. It's nice to have that one person pushing you forward and helping you with your work. They keep me on track and motivated. It's a teacher that cares about you for every subject, not just the one that the teacher teaches. *(Year 12 Male)*

Response rates to *not sure/don’t know/nothing* and *organisational/administrative support* categories were much weaker and therefore constitute negligible fields.

**5.2.3 Findings: Question 38:** What are the best things about the Learning Mentor Program?

*Observations from the Data: Year Level Data Trends*

The following categories of responses emerged from each of the six participating cohorts’ data in response to ‘*What are the best things about the Learning Mentor Program?*’

1. Time to complete academic tasks/homework/private study
2. Organisation of Learning Mentor Groups: Mix of students from Year 7 to Year 12
3. Assistance/support from Learning Mentor(s)
4. Family/team atmosphere within the Learning Mentor Group
5. Assistance from fellow Learning Mentor Group students
6. Learning Community gatherings and activities
7. Not sure/don’t know

*Years 7-12*

The first two listed categories were the most frequently tabled response fields across all cohorts, with participants prioritising time to complete academic tasks/homework/private study over organisation of Learning Mentor Groups: mix of students from Year 7 to Year 12 (see Appendix 17, Table 3). In addition, all Year Levels identified assistance from the Learning Mentor and family/team atmosphere
within the Learning Mentor Group as the next best features of the Program. Examples of student voice from each of these categories are:

**On Completion of Academic Tasks**

The best thing about the Learning Mentor Program are the study periods because you can do lots of homework, which makes it easier at home. *(Year 9 Male)*

The best thing is being able to have study periods, as sometimes homework expectations are unrealistic, considering sports and other commitments outside of school. Having this period gives me a bit of time to get a head start or finish off homework or get help from my mentor or classmates. It's good to have such a great learning mentor group. *(Year 10 Female)*

**On Mix of Students from other Year Levels**

The best thing about the Learning Mentor Program is being able to be with other people from your community that are in different grades and build friendships with them. *(Year 7 Female)*

The best thing is interacting with students from different Year levels. *(Year 12 Male)*

**On Assistance/Support from the Learning Mentor**

The best thing is that you always get help from the Learning Mentor if needed. They are always there for me. *(Year 8 Male)*

The best thing is being able to ask your Learning Mentor if there is something you don’t know or you have a problem with something. *(Year 11 Female)*
On Family/Team Atmosphere within the Learning Mentor Group

Being with the same people all the time is like having a little family. We are all quite close and it's a positive and happy environment to be in. I've made lots of good friends and developed relationships. *(Year 9 Female)*

The best thing is the feeling of inclusiveness and support. Not only is there your Learning Mentor there to help you, but all your peers whether they are younger or older. Age groups never divided my learning mentor group – everyone sits amongst everyone and speaks to everyone. *(Year 12 Male)*

*Learning community gatherings and activities* was the the lowest ranked ‘best thing’ identified in each Year group.

5.2.4 **Findings: Question 39:** What changes (if any) would you make to the Learning Mentor Program?

**Observations from the Data: Year Level Data Trends**

The following four change categories presented across the Year Level data:

1. Program infrastructures
2. Program content and activities
3. Learning Mentor role
4. No change

Within categories 1 to 3, a number of change areas were nominated by Year Level cohorts (see Appendix 17, Table 4). A summary of the key change areas follows, along with examples of student comments pertaining to the change area.

**Key Change Areas**

*Year 7 and Year 8*

**Category 1: Program Infrastructures: Student Recommendations**

- Schedule two long Learning Mentor periods weekly.
Examples of Student Voice

On Increasing Time

I would have two full Learning Mentor periods a week e.g. Monday and Friday so we can do our homework instead of at home. (Year 7 Male)

We need two long Learning Mentor periods a week just to keep up with the work. (Year 8 Female)

Years 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12

Category 2: Program Content and Activities: Student Recommendations

- Devote the majority of Learning Mentor time to the completion of homework or assessment tasks, private study, accessing assistance or in dialogue with the Learning Mentor

Examples of Student Voice

On Completion of Tasks in Learning Mentor Period

I need to get my homework done. We have too much to do and I don’t have enough time to do it at home. (Year 7 Female)

If I could get my homework done then and not do the other stuff they get us to do it would be better. (Year 8 Male)

Instead of doing other activities on Wednesday, I think we need to just focus on homework or preparing for exams and talking with my Learning Mentor. (Year 9 Male)

Less compulsory, assigned work. I do not find it especially helpful at all. Just use the time to do homework and get help with it. (Year 10 Female)

I think we need more study time and less reflecting - maybe study groups could run during this time or we could catch up with our mentor. (Year 11 Female)
More free study time especially for Year 12s. Less structured activities.

(Year 12 Male)

**Other Areas Identified**

Although much weaker in identification weights, the following two noteworthy change areas were also identified across all six participatory cohorts (Years 7-Year 12).

**Category 2: Program Content and Activities: Student Recommendations**

- Ensure Learning Mentor Group/Community/Inter-Community games and activities remain an integral part of the Program as they nurture a sense of belonging.

**Category 3: Learning Mentor Role: Student Recommendations**

- Monitor performance of Learning Mentors so that there are no distinct differences in support practices for mentees

**Examples of Student Voice**

*On Games and Activities*

I think we should do more activities with our whole Learning Mentor Group or mix with other Learning Mentor Groups - it would be cool if we did something outside. *(Year 8 Female)*

Have more activities and more things to make us bond with the older kids. Because we never really do anything with them. *(Year 9 Male)*

I would hope my Learning Mentor Group could do more fun things and get involved with each other more often. *(Year 10 Female)*

Either make it more enjoyable, or have more activities that the Learning Mentor can do as a group, so that everyone can bond and be friends with one another, so that nobody is left out. *(Year 12 Male)*
On Monitoring Performance of Learning Mentors

I would like my Learning Mentor to pay more attention to the younger years and not just to the Year 11s and 12s. *(Year 7 Male)*

I feel in general it is a good program that is beneficial to my learning however I don’t find find that my Learning Mentors are terribly supportive of me or interested in my learning. *(Year 9 Female)*

My Learning Mentor really needs to interact with the students more and understand them as teenagers. He needs to talk to us about our learning. That’s what happens in other groups. *(Year 10 Male)*

Make sure the mentors are more organised and that they become more involved with all of the students - making it an enjoyable and friendly place to come to each morning and Wednesday period 1. *(Year 12 Female)*

In summary, change areas within a response field were not necessarily expressed by all participating cohorts to the same extent, reinforcing the need for the consideration of the diversity of learning and social needs of students in developing programs of this nature, if they are to have relevance to those they intend to serve.

5.2.5 Findings: Question 40: Any other comments you would like to make about the Learning Mentor Program at the College?

There were no thematic trends within or across Year Level data sets for this question. It is to be noted that most questionnaire respondents either chose not to make any further comments about the Program or registered a positive satisfaction level with the initiative to date.

5.3 SECTION 3: FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

This section of the chapter presents the findings from the student focus group, which consisted of five Year 11 female students. Only one focus group could be convened for the inquiry and potential reasons for this small participatory response rate are detailed in Section 4.5 of Chapter 4 of the thesis, Research Methodology and Design. The following 7 questions with an open-ended format were used in the forum:
Table 5-12: Student Focus Group Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quest. No.</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1          | Can you comment on the structure of the Learning Mentor Program in terms of any of the following:  
(a) Organisation (Learning Communities and Learning Mentor Groups)  
(b) Aims  
(c) Learning Mentor Period (focus, content and frequency) |
| 2          | What are the best things about having a Learning Mentor? |
| 3          | What impact do you think the Program has had on your learning?  
- Directly  
- Indirectly |
| 4          | What are the best things about the Learning Mentor Program? |
| 5          | What are the Learning Mentor Program’s current challenges? |
| 6          | What changes (if any) would you make to the Learning Mentor Program? |
| 7          | Any other comments you would like to make about the Learning Mentor Program? |

As evidenced in the transcript for this focus group (see Appendix 18), a mix of prompts (to facilitate discussion) and cues (to further probe an area of discussion) were used throughout the session.

Observations from the Data

Because the focus group consisted of students from the same Year Level and same gender, findings from the discussion are only reported according to the three thematic bands of:

1. Program infrastructure and processes  
2. Relationship development  
3. Program impact

Examples of student voice pertaining to elements within a thematic band have also been included, as have any changes tabled by the focus group to enhance Program effectiveness.
5.3.1 Theme 1: Program Infrastructure and Processes

The three key Program elements supported by the group as evidenced throughout the discussion were:

(a) Structural frame, i.e. six Learning Communities each divided into Learning Mentor Groups
(b) Weekly 72-minute longer Learning Mentor period
(c) Mix of students from Years 7-12 within a Learning Mentor Group

Examples of Student Voice

On Structural Frame

Yeah, and with four (learning) communities there’ll be too many people and you just wouldn’t be - you wouldn’t have that one-on-one time ...
(Year 11 Female A)

On Long Learning Mentor Period

(Long Learning Mentor period) that’s when you learn, that’s when you study, that’s when you bond ... (Year 11 Female D)

On Meeting and Mixing with Students from other Year Levels

Getting to know other kids in different Year Levels and the same with the kids in (my) Year Level. I’m really friends with all the Year 11’s in my Learning Mentor Group but I probably wouldn’t have got to know them at all if I wasn’t in this group’. (Year 11 Female C)

Recommended Changes

The group tabled the need to:

(a) Allocate mentors with different field knowledge, e.g. a Mathematics teacher and an English teacher to a Learning Mentor Group, in order to broaden the scope of academic/learning support available to mentees
(b) Seek feedback from students to assist in Program development
Examples of Student Voice

On Learning Mentors and Subject Areas

When you ask a maths teacher for help with an essay they can help you to an extent, but they’re probably like, not really the right person to be asking (Year 11 Female E)

(Having) a humanities and a maths/science teacher, that would be really helpful … (Year 11 Female B)

On Student Feedback System

(Then) you’ve got like your student opinion on it (Learning Mentor Program) as well, instead of just having it all based around what teachers think they should do … (Year 11 Female C)

5.3.2 Theme 2: Relationship Development

The following four experiences of being mentored were most recognised by the focus group members:

The Learning Mentor…

1. Knows the mentee personally
2. Has developed a good relationship with the mentee
3. Gives advice and support to the mentee
4. Genuinely cares about the mentee in and out of the scheduled Learning Mentor time

Examples of Student Voice

On Mentor/Mentee Relationship

I just like how they know me … (Year 11 Female D)

I feel as though I have always got that person to go to for help … (Year 11 Female E)

Your Learning Mentor actually cares and actually wants to know how you are and everything. (Year 11 Female B)
You know them (Learning Mentor) personally. You don’t know them academically like your (subject) teachers. *(Year 11 Female C)*

And then in the schoolyard it’s so good when you see your Learning Mentor and they come and say hi to you and everything … *(Year 11 Female A)*

Social and emotional support of the mentee by the mentor over learning improvement support was clearly evident throughout the discussion for this cohort of participants.

**Recommended Change**

There was recognition that all Learning Mentors needed to have a common understanding of their role within the Program, so that there were no distinct operational or support differences experienced across Learning Mentor Groups.

**Example of Student Voice**

*On Differences in Practices*

When she (Focus Group member) says something about what they’ve done in Learning Mentor, I’m like ‘I wish we did something like that’ … ‘I wish we had that’ – more communication and stuff and just everyone being able to interact with each other and get to know each other more *(Year 11 Female D)*

5.3.3 Theme 3: Program Impact

As noted in 5.2.3, this theme focused on capturing students’ experience of the Learning Mentor Program’s effectiveness or impact in supporting and promoting the learning progression and the social and emotional wellbeing of the mentee. Whilst the latter outcome was recognized by group members in various parts of the discussion (see 5.2.1 and 5.2.2), limited reference was made to learning-related outcomes. One specific outcome that was identified – albeit as a result of facilitator prompting – was the mentoring of mentees by mentees. The example tabled occurred
in the senior school (Years 10, 11 and 12) and in the period leading up to subject selection for the mentees’ final two years of schooling.

Examples of Student Voice

On Mentoring of Mentees by Mentees

We use each other for help and everything when picking subjects, so I got so much help from the Year 11 and 12’s last year. I basically asked them everything about what subjects to take and everything and they helped me...

(Year 11 Female B)

I like that the Year 12’s are willing to help us but I was talking to the Year 10’s. We were talking to them about subjects, what they wanted and stuff...

(Year 11 Female A)

Another impact tabled by the group, but again related to the promotion of wellbeing, was the Program’s influence on the ongoing development of community spirit through scheduled activities.

Example of Student Voice

On Developing a Sense of Belonging

(The inter-Learning Mentor Group soccer game) gets the more academic kind of people in the Learning Mentor Group out as well and involved. It brings them out … because we made like Year 12 with a Year 7 – it was all age groups. It wasn’t like a Year 11 team. It was like Learning Mentor Group versus Learning Mentor Group so it was everyone in together and that’s what sort of brought us together as well. (Year 11 Female E)

No changes relating to the Program Impact thematic band were evident in the discussion.

Observations from Focus Group Data

The findings from the focus group session are supportive of the key findings from the Year 11 Questionnaire data – both open- and closed-response sets – in terms of Infrastructures (see Table 5-1, Q.6 and Q.9; Appendix 17, Table 3), Relationship
Development (see Table 5-4, Q.12, Q.16 and Q.17) and Program Impacts (see Table 5-7, Q.27-37).

5.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The findings presented in this chapter detail students’ experience of a whole-school approach to mentoring through an inclusive school-based Learning Mentor Program in terms of program infrastructure, relationship development and program outcomes. The voice of this stakeholder group was captured through two data collection instruments, i.e. a questionnaire consisting of closed- and open-response items and a single student focus group.

In analysing the resultant data sets, defined similarities as well as differences in participants’ experience of the Program presented across the six Year Levels. Differences were particularly evident between the Year 7 and the Years 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 cohorts. What follows is a summary of the major findings from the inquiry presented in thematic format.

5.4.1 Major Findings

The following are the five major findings presented from mentees’ experience of a whole school approach to mentoring through a Learning Mentor Program:

1. Infrastructures

The school organisational frame specifically designed to house and facilitate the operation of the Learning Mentor Program within the learning facility was identified as a significant feature of the whole-school approach by all participatory groups (see Table 5-1, Q.6). In addition, dosage of mentoring activity and its division across the weekly teaching and learning schedule (see Table 5-1, Q.9) and the allocation of students from all six Year Levels to a Learning Mentor Group (see Appendix 17, Table 3) were identified as other infrastructural influences of the initiative.

2. Learning Mentor

All six cohorts of participants valued (Appendix 17, Table 2) and experienced social, emotional and identity support from their mentor through the Program more than specific support to improve learning outcomes (see Table 5-4, Q.12, Q.16-19). The availability of the mentor to assist the mentee when required was particularly
recognised by all Year Levels as a key Program practice (see Table 5-4, Q.16; Appendix 17, Table 1 and Table 3). There was also recognition from all participatory groups that the sub-structures of the each Learning Community, i.e. the Learning Mentor Group (led by mentors), provided a caring, supportive and encouraging environment for the mentee (see Table 5-7, Q.25; Appendix 17, Table 3).

3. Program Design

In the ‘best things about the Program’ section, all Year Level cohorts registered a preference for the majority of the extended Learning Mentor lesson time to be devoted to the completion of homework or assessment tasks, private study, accessing assistance or dialogue with the Learning Mentor rather than participating in an additional program of content and activities (see Appendix 17, Table 3). From the mentees’ perspective therefore the preferred program focus needs to be on the individual’s subject workload and access to assistance and support from the Learning Mentor and others as needs arise.

4. Cohort Experience

Year 7 participants’ experiences of the Program differed in a number of areas to the other five cohorts. Unlike for other Year Levels, the aims of the Program were clear to Year 7 mentees (see Table 5-1, Q.4) and they were in agreement that an appropriate mix of learning and community activities were offered within the Program (see Table 5-1, Q.7). In addition, this group of participants recognised the role of the mentor in supporting the mentee to improve learning outcomes and learning confidence (see Table 5-4, Q.14, Q.15 and Q.21). Recognition of program impacts also differed to other Year Levels. Increased learning independence, use of different learning strategies and improved organisational, communication and teamwork skills were registered as Program outcomes for this cohort (see Table 5-7, Q.28, Q.29, Q.31, Q.32 and Q.34). These experience trends were not evident in any other Year Level data.

5. Gender Trends

Whilst a number of male gender trends were identified in the data, the only observation that deviated considerably from other Year Level data was Program impact on improved communication skills for Year 12 males (see Table 5-7 and
Table 5-10). This gender cohort recognised through their agreement response rate that improved communication skills were an outcome of Program participation.

The emerging female gender trends did not differ substantially from the Year Level trends for the same cohort sets (see Table 5-7, Q.30 and Q.33; Table 5-9).

Moving Forward

In Chapter 7, a summary of the key findings from this stakeholder group will be mapped to the research questions along with the findings from the Learning Mentor stakeholder group presented in Chapter 6. In the final chapter of the thesis, Chapter 8, these findings will be discussed in relation to the research questions.
CHAPTER 6 RESEARCH FINDINGS: LEARNING MENTORS

This chapter details mentor experience of a whole school approach to mentoring students through a school-based Learning Mentor Program in terms of program infrastructure and processes, relationship development and program impact. These three thematic lenses were also utilised in the reporting of student experiences in Chapter 5. In addition to these, a fourth one – mentor role – was included for this stakeholder group.

ORGANISATION OF THE CHAPTER

There are three sections to this chapter. The first section maps the findings from the closed-response items of the anonymous online questionnaire (see Appendix 14), according to the four lenses identified earlier. Since Questions 1-5 of the questionnaire required consent to participate and identification of gender, employment category, leadership status and years of teaching responses, the findings commence with Questions 6-11. All closed-response item data were initially collated as All Learning Mentors data (see Appendix 19) and then into the following sub-groups in order to identify any trends emerging from within and/or across mentor groupings:

(a) Teacher Mentor/Non-Teacher Mentor data (see Appendix 20)
(b) Teacher Mentor Leadership Role/Teacher Mentor No Leadership Role (see Appendix 21)
(c) Teacher Mentors ≤ 10 years of experience/Teacher Mentors > 10 years of experience (see Appendix 22)

The second section of the chapter maps the findings from the thematic analysis of the open-ended response items from the same data gathering instrument (see Appendix 23). The questionnaire was completed by 58 Learning Mentors (46 teachers and 12 non-teachers), which represent 66% of the eligible mentor cohort. Of the 46 teacher mentors, 19 occupied leadership roles at the research site at the time of data gathering and 34 had worked in the teaching profession for longer than 10 years.
The final section of the chapter reports findings from 10 semi-structured interviews. Of the ten participants, eight were teaching mentors and two non-teaching mentors. Ten questions with an open-ended format were developed for use in this forum and are detailed in 6.3. In total, 68 Learning Mentors participated in the inquiry, including all 14 non-teacher mentors. This represents 77% of the eligible mentor cohort.

The chapter concludes with an overall summary of the key findings emanating from the data sets.

6.1 SECTION 1: QUESTIONNAIRE CLOSED RESPONSE ITEM FINDINGS

The questionnaire consisted of 30 closed Likert-type response items intentionally grouped into thematic categories by the researcher through question sequence. These categories were not identified on the questionnaire. What follows are the findings from the closed-response items tabled by theme and mentor grouping.

6.1.1 Theme 1: Program Infrastructure and Processes

This theme focussed on capturing mentors’ understanding and experience of the following organisational elements of the Learning Mentor Program:

(a) Aims
(b) Structural frame
(c) Time allocation
(d) Activities and content
(e) Meeting of mentor expectations

All Learning Mentors and Sub-Group Data Trends

In order to identify the existence of any trends, agreement response rates (i.e. agree + strongly agree) for each question were calculated, and these data are presented in Table 6-1. In addition, agreement response rates equal to or greater than 60% are bolded in red.
Table 6-1: All Learning Mentors and Sub-Groups Agreement Response Rates: Questionnaire Items 6-11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Learning Mentor Program has …</th>
<th>Agreement Response Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All LMs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Clear aims</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Met expectations</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Sound structure: LCs and LMGs</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Right mix of learning/community activities</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Relevant activities/content in LMP</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Adequate time allocated to LPR</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key

LMG = Learning Mentor Group  LMP = Learning Mentor Period  LPR = Learning Mentor Program  LC = Learning Community  LMs = Learning Mentors

≤ = Less than or Equal to  > = Greater than

Questions 12 and 13 are not included in Table 6-1 as these data are summarised in the responses to adequate time is allocated to the Learning Mentor Program (see Question 11).
Observations from the Data: Program Infrastructure and Processes

As highlighted in Table 6-1, the three organisational elements most supported by all four categories of respondents and their sub-groups were the Program’s structural frame, aims, and time allocations.

Least supported by the same cohorts were those items relating to the relevance of Program content, the balance of learning- and community-focused activities and whether the Program had met expectations.

Sub-Group Trends

Non-teacher mentors registered considerably higher agreement response rates than teacher mentors and all other sub-groups on the items relating to whether the Learning Mentor Program met mentor expectations and provided interesting and relevant content/activities to complete in the Learning Mentor Period.

No other sub-group trends presented in the data for Theme 1: Program Infrastructure and Processes.

6.1.2 Theme 2: Learning Mentor Role

This theme focused on capturing the Learning Mentors’ voice on their role within the Program, including preparation prior to implementation of the initiative and the level of ongoing support to meet the challenges of mentoring.

All Learning Mentors and Sub-Group Data Trends

As in 6.1.1, agreement response rates (i.e. agree + strongly agree) for each question for Theme 2: Learning Mentor Role have been calculated, and these data are presented in Table 6-2. Agreement response rates equal to or greater than 60% are bolded in red.
Table 6-2: All Learning Mentors and Sub-Groups Agreement Response Rates: Questionnaire Items 14-17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Mentor Role …</th>
<th>Agreement Response Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All LMs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Enough training before becoming a LM</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Enough ongoing support</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Understand my role as LM</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Often reflect on my effectiveness in role</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key**

LM = Learning Mentor  \( \leq \) = Less than or Equal to  \( > \) = Greater than
Observations from the Data

Learning Mentor Role

The agreement response rate data in Table 6-2 indicate that there was general consensus from all four categories of respondents and their sub-groups that they understood their role; however, there was also recognition that more training/professional learning before commencing the position was required.

Sub-Group Trend

Teacher mentors without leadership roles and teacher mentors with less than or equal to 10 years of teaching experience registered lower agreement response rates to other groups on Item 17 (‘I often reflect on my effectiveness as a Learning Mentor’). In addition, there was a 39% agreement response rate difference between teacher mentors with leadership roles and teacher mentors without leadership roles on the same item.

No other sub-group trends presented in the data for Theme 2: Learning Mentor Role.

6.1.3 Theme 3: Relationship Development

This theme focused on capturing mentors’ voice on the strength and nature of relationships developed as a result of their mentoring role within the Program.

All Learning Mentors and Sub-Group Data Trends

As in Tables 6-1 and 6-2, agreement response rates for each question have been calculated, and these data are presented in Table 6-3. Agreement response rates equal to or greater than 60% are bolded in red.
### Table 6-3: All Learning Mentors and Sub-Groups Agreement Response Rates: Questionnaire Items 19-24

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agreement Response Rate (%)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All LMs</td>
<td>Teach LMs</td>
<td>Non Teach LMs</td>
<td>Teach + Lead LMs</td>
<td>Teach + No Lead LMs</td>
<td>Teach ≤ 10 yrs LMs</td>
<td>Teach &gt; 10 yrs LMs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Students in my LMG feel connected to a significant adult</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>I have developed a good relationship with my LMG</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>I know how the students in my LMG learn best</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>I recognize the achievements of my students in my LMG</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>I regularly update parents/guardians of mentee progress</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>LMP activities have helped mentees consolidate relationships within LMG</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key**

**LMG** = Learning Mentor Group  
**LMP** = Learning Mentor Period  
**LPR** = Learning Mentor Program  
≤ = Less than or Equal to  
> = Greater than
Observations from the Data

Relationship Development

The agreement response rate data in Table 6-3 indicates that there was general consensus from all four categories of respondents and their sub-groups that mentors had developed a good relationship with their Learning Mentor Group and recognized mentee achievements as they presented.

In addition, all cohorts were in agreement that, from their experience, mentees felt connected to a significant adult as a result of participation in the Program.

Low agreement response rates were a feature of all cohorts in relation to the regular update of parents/guardians on mentee progress.

Sub-group Trends

(a) With the exception of non-teacher mentors, low agreement response rates featured across sub-groups for mentor knowledge of how mentees learn best. It is noteworthy that, compared to teacher mentors, the non-teacher mentor sub-group’s agreement response rate on this item was 38% higher.

(b) The only two sub-groups that affirmed Learning Mentor Program activities had supported students to consolidate relationships with members of their Learning Mentor Group were teacher mentors with leadership roles and teacher mentors with less than or equal to ten years teaching experience. No other sub-group trends presented in the data for Theme 3: Relationship Development.

6.1.4 Theme 4: Program Impact

This theme focused on capturing mentees’ experience of the Learning Mentor Program’s effectiveness or impact in supporting and promoting the learning progression and the social and emotional wellbeing of the mentee.

All Learning Mentors and Sub-Group Data Trends

As in Tables 6-1 to 6-3, agreement response rates for each question have been calculated, and these data are presented in Table 6-4. Agreement response rates equal to or greater than 60% are bolded in red.
Observations from the Data

Program Impact
(a) The agreement response rate data in Table 6-4 indicates that there was general consensus from all four categories of respondents and their sub-groups that a key impact of the initiative was the ongoing provision of a caring, supportive and encouraging environment for students within their Learning Mentor Group. There was also recognition that within this environment, students were encouraged to support each other in their learning.

(b) The three impacts least recognised by all groups were the learning related outcomes of:
- Improved grades and test scores
- Use of different learning strategies
- Use of different problem-solving strategies

In summary, mentor cohorts gave greater recognition to the social/emotional support outcomes that result from participating in the Program over those directly focussed on the development of defined skills to enhance learning gain.

Sub-Group Trends
(a) Low agreement response rates were a feature across most cohorts in relation to the influence the Program activities had on developing learning-related, organisational, teamwork or communication skills. Non-teacher mentors and teacher mentors with leadership roles were the two sub-groups that did recognize some impact, but only in the promotion of the following areas:
- Learning independence
- Communication skills
- Setting of learning goals
- Teamwork skills (non-teacher mentors only)
- Mentee understanding of how they best learn (teacher mentors with leadership roles only)

In addition, these two sub-groups were the only cohorts that considered the extended Learning Mentor Period to be an important component of their weekly schedule of classes.
(b) Non-teacher mentors were the only cohort affirming the Learning Mentor Program had motivated students to improve their own learning, and who tabled higher agreement response rates across all items in this section of the questionnaire than teacher mentors.

It is to be noted that only three of the non-teacher mentor response items received an agreement response rate of less than 50%, compared to 11 of the 14 items from teacher mentors.

No other sub-group trends presented in the data for Theme 4: Program Impact.
Table 6-4: All Learning Mentors and Sub-Groups Agreement Response Rates: Questionnaire Items 25-38

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Impact</th>
<th>Agreement Response Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All LMs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 The LMP is an important part of my weekly schedule of classes</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 LMG provides caring, supporting and encouraging environment for students</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 I encourage members of my LMG to help each other</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The activities completed in the Learning Mentor Period have helped students to …..

|                                                                               | All LMs | Teach LMs | Non Teach LMs | Teach + Lead LMs | Teach + No Lead LMs | Teach ≤ 10 yrs LMs | Teach > 10 yrs LMs |
|                                                                               | 37      | 31        | 58            | 63              | 24               | 35               | 37               |
| 28 Understand how they learn best                                            | 46      | 38        | 75            | 63              | 36               | 45               | 46               |
| 29 Become more independent learners                                         | 46      | 44        | 50            | 47              | 45               | 50               | 43               |
| 30 Improve organisational skills                                            | 23      | 22        | 25            | 21              | 24               | 20               | 23               |
| 31 Improve grades and test scores                                           | 51      | 47        | 66            | 63              | 45               | 55               | 46               |
| 32 Develop better communication skills                                      | 53      | 47        | 75            | 58              | 50               | 55               | 51               |
| 33 Develop better teamwork skills                                          | 55      | 52        | 67            | 68              | 47               | 55               | 51               |
| 34 Set learning goals                                                       | 23      | 22        | 25            | 38              | 16               | 25               | 20               |
| 35 Use different learning strategies                                      | 17      | 16        | 25            | 26              | 13               | 15               | 17               |
| 36 Use different problem-solving strategies                                 | 46      | 44        | 50            | 53              | 42               | 45               | 46               |
| 37 Develop confidence as a learner                                        | 40      | 31        | 67            | 47              | 37               | 30               | 46               |

38 The LPR has helped motivate students to improve their own learn

**Key**

LMG = Learning Mentor Group  LMP = Learning Mentor Period  LPR = Learning Mentor Program  ≤ = Less than or Equal to  > = Greater than
6.2 SECTION 2: QUESTIONNAIRE OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE ITEM FINDINGS

This section of the chapter maps the findings resulting from the thematic analysis of the following 5 open-ended response items from the questionnaire:

Table 6-5: Questionnaire Open-ended Response Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quest. No.</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>What are the best things about being a Learning Mentor? What are the challenges?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>What are the best things about the Learning Mentor Program? What are its challenges?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>What benefits have accrued for you as a result of participating in the Program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>What changes (if any) would you make to the Learning Mentor Program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Any other comments you would like to make about the Learning Mentor Program?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data trends presenting in response to each question follow. They were derived from the Learning Mentor Data Summary Tables for Open-Ended Response Questions (see Appendix 23).

6.2.1 Findings: Question 18: What are the best things about being a Learning Mentor Program? What are the challenges?

Where a response or part of a response made reference to the best things about the Learning Mentor Program instead of the role of Learning Mentor, those response sets were transferred to Question 39 for analysis: What are the best things about the Learning Mentor Program? What are its challenges?

Observations from the Data: (A) Best Things about being a Learning Mentor

All Learning Mentors Data Trends

The following five categories of responses (in rank order) emerged from the All Learning Mentor data:
1. Building and sustaining trusting and supportive relationships with mentees
2. Building relationships with parents/families of mentees
3. Developing a sense of community within the Learning Mentor Group
4. Supporting mentee learning
5. Mentoring a student from Year 7 through to Year 12

Sub-Group Data Trends

(a) The only two significant response categories evident in the non-teacher mentor data were Category 1: Building and sustaining trusting and supportive relationships with mentees and Category 2: Building relationships with parents/families of mentees (see Appendix 23, Q.18 (a)). Examples of responses from this cohort are:

On Mentor/Mentee Relationships

(The best thing about being a Learning Mentor is) getting to know your learning mentor group’s students and their needs. It allows for a strong bond and trust to develop between mentor and student. (Non-Teacher Mentor)

On Parent/Family Relationships

Engaging with parents and developing a relationship that lasts is one of the best things of the mentoring role. (Non-Teacher Mentor)

(b) All other sub-groups followed the All Learning Mentor data trends listed when cohort size was taken into account in the observation (see Appendix 23, Q.18 (a)). Examples of evidence from each response category are:

On Mentor/Mentee Relationships

The best things (about being a mentor) are the strong relationships formed with students. You get an understanding of what works for them. It allows you to be an advocate for them and to make sure they are getting a holistic experience here at school. (Teacher Mentor)
On Parent/Family Relationships

The best things (about being a mentor) are engaging with parents and developing a relationship with them. Also being able to communicate with families other than those of the students I teach. (Teacher Mentor)

On Developing a Sense of Community

The best thing (about being a learning mentor) is being able to create a family like atmosphere in the learning mentor group. This gives students the opportunity to feel connected to the school through a sense of community. (Teacher Mentor)

On Supporting Mentees’ Learning

The best thing (about being a learning mentor) is learning about a student’s methods of learning and working out ways of supporting this. Also getting students to set goals and think about their achievements and areas for improvement. (Teacher Mentor)

On Mentoring Students through to Year 12

The best thing (about being a learning mentor) is the ongoing nature of the relationship between mentee and mentor i.e. it continues throughout a student’s time at the school – from Year 7 to Year 12. (Teacher Mentor)

In summary, the prevailing focus across the ‘best things’ response themes was on the development and sustaining of relationships with key stakeholders. The specific support of mentees’ learning was secondary to the latter theme.

Observations from the Data: (B) Challenges of the Mentoring Role

Data Trends

The following four key response categories (in rank order) emerged from the All Learning Mentor data in response to ‘What are the challenges of being a Learning Mentor?’
1. Not having enough structured, relevant and differentiated content to deliver in the Program
2. Managing administrative and mentoring demands of role alongside teaching/non-teaching role
3. Supporting mentees’ learning
4. Supporting mentees with a diversity of needs (including behavioural)

*Sub-Group Data Trends*

All sub-groups followed the *All Learning Mentor* data trends listed for the key response categories when cohort size was taken into account (see Appendix 23, Q.18 (b)). Examples of evidence from each response category are:

**On Program Content**

How can one program fit all Year Levels? I think the program should be more tailored to individual year groups and have sessions in year groups. Currently the Program is irrelevant and unconnected to the broader student experience. *(Learning Mentor)*

**On Managing Administrative and Mentoring Demands of Role with Teaching Role**

The challenges are mostly related to the administrative time it takes to properly manage the students we are responsible for. Some students I will only have a serious discussion with twice a year and maybe see their parents once a year at Career Counselling interviews. Other students who have welfare or learning issues take a lot of time and energy to manage. I have had several students like this and it might mean that I am trying to contact home a lot, write emails and have face-to-face case management meetings after school once per fortnight. This becomes a burden that needs to be managed along with my teaching commitments. *(Learning Mentor)*
On Supporting Mentees’ Learning

I enjoy being part of the program and the community building aspect of it, but I don’t know how much I actually support my mentees’ learning. (Learning Mentor)

On Mentoring Students with a Diversity of Needs

Understanding the real processes for supporting students with difficult behaviours or other high end needs is a problem. Learning Mentors shoulder the responsibility for these students - it is expected that they know all and handle all. But we do not spend the same about of time with the students as their classroom teachers. Most of the time, their classroom teachers have more knowledge and understanding of the students and are therefore more equipped to deal with the issues facing them. (Learning Mentor)

6.2.2 Findings: Question 39: What are the best things about the Learning Mentor Program? What are its challenges?

Where a response or part of a response made reference to the best things about being a Learning Mentor instead of the Learning Mentor Program, those response sets were transferred to Question 18 for analysis: What are the best things about being a Learning Mentor? What are the challenges?

Observations from the Data: (A) Best Things about the Learning Mentor Program

There were no key thematic trends presenting in the All Learning Mentor or sub-group data in relation to this question (see Appendix 23, Q.39 (a)).

Observations from the Data: (B) Learning Mentor Program Challenges

All Learning Mentors Data Trends

The following three categories of responses (in rank order) emerged from the data (see Appendix 23, Q.39 (b)):

1. Developing relevant, differentiated and learning focussed Program content
2. Engagement of all stakeholders in the Program – students and mentors
3. Delivering original Program intent i.e. supporting mentees as learners
A weaker theme – providing ongoing professional learning for mentors to effectively carry out their role to achieve Program aims – also presented. Examples of evidence from each response category are:

**On Engagement of Stakeholder - Student**

A challenge is engaging students who don’t ‘buy in’ to the Program or see how it benefits them. (*Learning Mentor*)

**On Engagement of Stakeholder - Mentor**

Some Learning Mentors are not passionate about the Program so can be lazy or inadequate compared to others which inequitable for the students. (*Learning Mentor*)

**On Program Content**

The Program consists of disjointed activities to fill in time rather than to develop skills. (*Learning Mentor*)

**On Delivering Original Program Intent**

The biggest challenge is to ensure that the original intent of the Program is restored – that it is a Program to help students learn and understand how they learn. (*Learning Mentor*)

**On Mentor Professional Learning**

Too many assumptions are made in regards to the ability of staff to deliver many of the Program goals. There needs to be ongoing training. (*Learning Mentor*)

**Sub-Group Data Trends**

No significant sub-group data trends were evident in the data when cohort size was taken into account in the observation.
6.2.3 **Findings: Question 40:** What benefits have accrued for you as a result of participating in the Program?

**Observations from the Data: All Learning Mentors Data Trends**

The one significant benefit accrued for mentors as a result of participating in the Program was the development of stronger relationships with students (see Appendix 23, Q.40). An example of mentor voice from this response category follows:

*On Developing Relationships with Mentees*

A chance to build strong relationships with my mentees. It is gratifying when students recognise you genuinely care about them. *(Learning Mentor)*

Other, much weaker themes were:

- Stronger relationships with parent/families of mentees
- Increased sense of connectedness to the school
- Satisfaction from seeing mentees improve in their learning life

In general, the overall response focus was on relationship development rather than learning-related benefits.

**Sub-Group Data Trends**

Whilst not constituting themes, the non-teaching mentor sub-group were the only cohort to identify the following benefits accrued as a result of Program participation:

- New skills
- Increased self-confidence
- Improved level of job satisfaction
- New sense of pride and purpose in work

In addition, one non-teaching mentor’s response related to change in employment status:
The experience I have gained as a Learning Mentor has influenced my decision to complete further education and become a teacher. *(Non-Teacher Learning Mentor)*

No other significant sub-group data trends were evident in the data when cohort size was taken into account in the observation.

6.2.4 **Findings: Question 41:** What changes (if any) would you make to the Learning Mentor Program?

**Observations from the Data: All Learning Mentors Data Trends**

The key change category emerging from the data was to develop and resource a more relevant learning-focussed curriculum for the Learning Mentor Program that caters for the specific needs of the each of the six Year Levels (see Appendix 23, Q.41). Other weaker response categories were:

1. Provide ongoing professional learning for mentors
2. Increase the number of Community events to balance the Program
3. Set expectations of Learning Mentors and monitor performance
4. Set expectations of Learning Community Leaders and monitor performance

**Sub-Group Data Trends**

The non-teacher mentor sub-group did not identify Categories 3 or 4 from the latter list in their response set. These categories related to role expectations and performance accountability of Learning Community Leaders and Learning Mentors. There were no other sub-group trends evident in the data.

Examples of mentor voice from each of the Change response categories are:

**On Program Content**

Develop a set curriculum that is relevant to each Year Level, manageable, student needs driven and requires students to reflect on their learning via discussions with their Learning Mentor. *(Learning Mentor)*
On Mentor Professional Learning

Ongoing training and professional learning is required to deliver the intent of the Program. (Learning Mentor)

On Community Activities

More community activities e.g. team building, incorporated into the Program. (Learning Mentor)

On the Role of the Learning Mentor

There needs to be more ownership of the Program from Learning Mentors. There are some excellent mentors and others that do it as a token responsibility. (Learning Mentor)

On the Role of the Learning Community Leader

The Learning Community Leader role has not evolved according to their job description. The original job description included plans for them to guide and develop mentors in their community as well as students. Little has been done in this area by some Community Leaders. (Learning Mentor)

6.2.5 Findings: Question 42: Any other comments you would like to make about the Learning Mentor Program?

A summary of question response category frequencies are presented in Appendix 23, Q.42.

Observations from the Data

Although over 50% of this participatory group returned a response of ‘no other comments’ to the question, minor ‘other comment’ themes emerging from the ‘responses other than no’ from All Learning Mentor data were: support for the Program’s intent, necessity to set expectations of Learning Mentors and Learning Community Leaders and monitor performance, and recognition that the Program was still in infancy of operation and development. Apart from no further comment, non-teacher mentors only recorded responses in the support for program intent category.
6.3 SECTION 3: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FINDINGS

This section of the chapter presents findings from semi-structured interviews conducted with ten Learning Mentors. Eight of the participants were teaching mentors and two non-teaching mentors. Of the eight teaching mentors, three occupied leadership roles and five had more than ten years of teaching experience. The following ten questions with an open-ended format were used in each interview:

Table 6-6: Learning Mentor Semi-Structured Interview Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quest. No.</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Can you comment on the Learning Mentor Program in terms of its aims and organisation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Can you comment on the Learning Mentor Period in terms of frequency, focus and content?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>As a Learning Mentor can you comment on the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Training/Professional Learning made available to you before commencing in the role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Your understanding of the role of Learning Mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Your relationship with your Learning Mentor Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>What are the best things about the Learning Mentor Program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>What are the Learning Mentor Program’s current challenges?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>What are the best things about being a Learning Mentor?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>What are the challenges of being a Learning Mentor?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>What benefits have accrued for you personally as a result of participating in the Program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>What changes (if any) would you make to the Learning Mentor Program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Any other comments you would like to make about the Learning Mentor Program?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As evidenced in the semi-structured interview transcripts (see Appendix 24), a mix of prompts (to elicit the mentor’s ideas, opinions and experiences) and probes (to further explore a particular response) were used throughout the interview.

Observations from the Data

On scanning the data it became obvious that the identification of substantive differences between sub-group contributions could not be made with confidence and
therefore the data are reported through the single lens of All Learning Mentors. The following four response fields were identified from the interviews:

1. Program Infrastructure and Processes
2. Mentor role – best things
3. Current challenges
4. Changes

Within each response field a number of themes were identified. Where 60% or more of the cohort (i.e. six or more mentors) identified a common observation/experience in their dialogue, it was recorded as a theme. The key themes that emerged from the All Learning Mentor interview data are listed in Table 6-7 along with the percentage response rate.

Table 6-7: All Learning Mentor Semi-Structured Interview Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Themes</th>
<th>% Response Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program Infrastructure and Processes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate time allocated to the LPR - (1 x 72 minutes) + (5 x 8 minute) weekly</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPR has sound structure: 6 Learning Communities and LMGs</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mentor Role – Best Things</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships developed with mentees</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrating mentee achievements</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships developed with families</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily contact with the mentees</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting to know mentees outside their regular classrooms</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting mentees socially and emotionally</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Challenges</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To confirm the purpose and direction of the LPR</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the LPR to have impact on the learning lives of mentees</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To decrease the great variation in both the understanding and execution of the LM role</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Changes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure adequate training of mentors occurs prior to role occupancy to prepare for and support their operation in the role</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a more relevant learning focussed curriculum for the Program that caters for the needs of all six Year Levels</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set expectations of LMs and LCLs and monitor performance</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide ongoing professional learning for LMs</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide the LPR schedule at the start of each term</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review aims and impact of the Program with all stakeholders</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examples of mentor voice from each of the four identified response fields follow:

**On Program Infrastructure**

The community structure seems to work well. I think it generates a lot of community and enthusiasm throughout the school and throughout the different events and activities and things like that. *(Learning Mentor)*

**On Mentor Role: Relationships with Mentees**

I like the information that the kids come and share with you as well. It could be something as small as they've got a new dog, or mum or dad is getting remarried, or they're going on an overseas trip. I love that spark and the fact that those kids seek you out to come and talk to you about their concerns, or just to celebrate good things. *(Learning Mentor)*

**On Challenges: Program Impact on Learning Lives of Mentees**

I don’t think we’re seeing a really strong connection between students learning’ and what happens in LM ….. there were missed opportunities to make connections with what the kids do in LM with what they’re doing in the classroom. We need to look at this. *(Learning Mentor)*

**On Changes: Review of Aims and Impact**

Obviously it [the Learning Mentor Program] was a huge shift [from the previous model]. The first few years it was all about introducing the Program, but now we need to be really clear on what its role is, how it is tracking and whether or not it has achieved its aims. *(Learning Mentor)*

Whilst recognizing that the non-teacher mentor cohort for this data-gathering technique was small, it is noteworthy that *setting expectations of Learning Mentors*
and monitoring their performance failed to present in both of the non-teacher mentor interview dialogues.

Overall, the findings from the semi-structured interview sessions are supportive of the key findings from the Learning Mentor Questionnaire data – both open- and closed-response sets in terms of *Infrastructures* (see Table 6-1, Q.8 and Q.11), *Learning Mentor Role* (see Table 6-2, Q.14 and Q.15), *Relationship Development* (see Table 6-3, Q.19, Q.20 and Q.22; Appendix 23 Q.18(a) and Q.40) and *Program Impacts* (see Appendix 23, Q.39 (b)).

6.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The findings presented in this chapter detail mentors’ experience of a whole-school approach to mentoring through an inclusive, school-based *Learning Mentor Program* in terms of program infrastructure, mentoring role, relationship development and program outcomes. The voice of this stakeholder group was captured through two data collection instruments: i.e. a questionnaire consisting of closed- and open-response items and ten semi-structured interviews.

Across the categories of responses, similarities as well as differences of experience of the Program emerged across the sub-groups. What follows is a summary of the major and minor findings from the inquiry, with the major findings presented in a thematic format.

6.4.1 Major Findings

The following major findings presented from mentors’ experience of a whole school approach to mentoring students through a *Learning Mentor Program*:

1. **Infrastructures**

The school organisational frame (specifically designed to house and facilitate the operation of the *Learning Mentor Program* within the learning facility) was identified as a significant feature of the whole-school approach (see Table 6-1, Q.8; Table 6-7). In addition, dosage of mentoring activity and its division across the weekly teaching and learning schedule (see Table 6-1, Q. 11; Table 6-7), clarity of program aims (see Table 6-1, Q.6), and mentor role (see Table 6-2, Q.16) were
identified as significant infrastructural influences on the initiative by this cohort of participants.

2. Mentor Role and Relationship Development

The building and sustaining of trusting relationships with mentees, within the caring, supportive and encouraging environment of the Learning Mentor Group, emerged as the priority of mentors and the lead outcome from the program (see Table 6-3, Q.20; Table 6-4, Q.26; Table 6-7; Appendix 23, Q.18 (a) and Q.40). Under these conditions mentees connect to a significant adult (the mentor) who advocates for and recognises achievements of the individual throughout the duration of the dyad (see Table 6-3, Q.19 and Q.22; Table 6-7).

3. Program Design

For mentoring programs to impact directly on improved learning outcomes for the mentee, differentiated sub-programs by year level that respond to the specific needs and learning stage of each cohort (through a defined focus, content and activities) were recognised as a critical pillar of program design, and a requisite for engaging mentees (see Appendix 23, Q.39 (b); Q.41; Table 6-7). In addition, the fostering and enabling of peer mentoring within Learning Mentor Groups was identified as a key practice of a full school approach (see Table 6-4, Q.27). In summary, Program design needs to enable participants to reach the stated anticipated outcomes.

4. Mentor Source

Within the mentor data, a number of differences in the way the Learning Mentor Program was experienced emerged from subgroup response sets.

(a) Non-Teacher Mentors and Teacher Mentors

A key learning outcome from the mentoring experience for non-teacher mentors was knowing how their mentees learn best (see Table 6-3, Q.21). In addition, there was recognition by this sub-group that the Program activities and content delivered in the weekly long Learning Mentor Period were interesting, relevant to Program intent (see Table 6-1, Q.10) and supported the development of mentees’ learning independence and teamwork skills (see Table 6-4, Q.29 and Q.33). Non-teacher mentors also recognised that the Program helped motivate students to improve their own learning (see Table 6-4, Q.38). These experience trends were not evident in the
teacher mentor data. Furthermore, unlike teacher mentors, non-teacher mentors affirmed that the Program had met their expectations (see Table 6-1, Q.7) and that it was an important part of their weekly work schedule (see Table 6-4, Q.25). In terms of the change data submitted, there was no reference to the implementation of performance accountability measures for Learning Community Leaders and Learning Mentors in any non-teaching mentor data (see Appendix 23, Q.41 and Q.42).

(b) **Teacher Mentors in Leadership Roles and Teacher Mentors Not in Leadership Roles**

Teacher mentors in leadership roles registered that they often reflect on their effectiveness as a mentor (see Table 6-2, Q. 17) and considered the extended Learning Mentor Period to be an important part of their weekly schedule of classes (see Table 6-4, Q.25). In addition, there was recognition by this sub-group that the activities completed within the Program helped mentees to consolidate relationships within the Learning Mentor Group (see Table 6-3, Q.24), become more independent learners, and set learning goals (see Table 6-4, Q.29 and Q.34). Leader teacher mentors also acknowledged that the Program activities supported mentees to understand how they learn best (see Table 6-4, Q.28). These experience trends were not evident in the non-leader teacher mentor responses.

(c) **Teacher Mentors with ≤ 10 Years Teaching Experience and Teacher Mentors with > 10 Years Teaching Experience**

Two key differences of experience emerged from the data from this set of sub-groups. Teacher mentors with more than 10 years teaching experience registered that they often reflect on their effectiveness as a mentor (see Table 6-2, Q. 17). This response trend was not evident in the partner sub-group data. The second difference emerged from teacher mentors with 10 years or less of teaching experience, with this cohort of respondents recognising that the activities completed in the Learning Mentor Program helped mentees to consolidate relationships within their Learning Mentor Group (see Table 6-3, Q.24). This response trend was not evident in the more than 10 years teaching experience sub-group data set.
6.4.2 Minor Findings

Two minor findings presented in the data. Both findings were related to the pre-program planning phase and highlighted the need for their inclusion in initiatives of similar intent.

1. Minor Finding 1

All mentors should complete a defined mentor training program prior to occupation of the mentoring role so that they are cognizant of effective mentoring within the school setting and can demonstrate the skills and attitudes it requires (see Table 6-2, Q.14; Table 6-7).

2. Minor Finding 2

A performance monitoring structure for Learning Mentors and Learning Community Leaders should be developed and implemented in order to track the degree of equity of experience and outcome for mentees within and across Learning Mentor Groups and across Learning Communities. This finding was sourced from teacher mentor data only, as there was no reference to monitoring structures in non-teacher mentor data (see Table 6-7, Appendix 23, Q.41 and 42).

Moving Forward

In Chapter 7, a summary of the key findings from this stakeholder group will be mapped to the research questions along with the findings from the student stakeholder group presented in Chapter 5. In the final chapter of the thesis, Chapter 8, these findings will be discussed in relation to the research questions.
CHAPTER 7 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The overarching purpose of this inquiry was to investigate what factors may influence the experience of participants in a school-based mentoring program delivered through a whole-school approach in order to inform the broader context of student mentoring schemes. Within this inquiry focus, experiences of stakeholder subgroups were also explored. Year level and gender were the two subgroups examined for students, and for Learning Mentors the following three employment fields: (1) teachers/non-teachers; (2) teachers occupying a leadership or a non-leadership role, and (3) teachers with less than or equal to 10 years’ experience, or with more than 10 years’ experience.

In this chapter of the thesis, the major themes and issues emerging from stakeholder data (i.e. students and Learning Mentors, presented in Chapters 5 and 6 respectively) will be mapped in relation to the overarching research question and to the following stakeholder sub-questions:

1. Do experiences differ for students at different Year Levels?
2. Do experiences differ for male and female student cohorts?
3. Do experiences differ for teacher and non-teacher Learning Mentors?
4. Do experiences differ for teacher mentors occupying leadership roles to teacher mentors not in leadership roles?
5. Do experiences differ for teacher mentors with more than 10 years teaching experience to those with less than 10 years teaching experience?

ORGANISATION OF THE CHAPTER

There are three sections to the chapter. The first section will detail the key factors identified by stakeholders that influence the mentoring experience when delivered through a whole school approach. The second and third sections of the chapter will focus on any differences between subgroups of the two stakeholder groups.

The chapter will conclude with a summation of these major findings.
7.1 SECTION 1: FACTORS INFLUENCING MENTORING EXPERIENCES FOR STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

Both program parameter and relational factors were recognized by stakeholder group(s) as influencing the mentoring experience. What follows is the identification of these factors mapped within the appropriate field.

7.1.1 Program Parameter Factors

1. School Organisational Frame

The frame was specifically developed to house and facilitate the operation of the Learning Mentor Program within the learning facility, and was identified as a significant feature of the whole-school approach by both mentor and mentee stakeholder groups (see Table 5-1, Q.6; Table 6-1, Q.8; Table 6-7). It consists of six Learning Communities each sub-divided into seven Learning Mentor Groups (LMGs). Two Learning Mentors, and approximately 26 students drawn from each of the six Year Levels (Years 7-12) are allocated to a Learning Mentor Group. This frame replaced a traditional ‘House’ system of organization where the focus of the group loyalty was essentially sport, not learning.

2. Program Aims

This parameter of program design, underpinned by three fundamental tenets, had great clarity for the Learning Mentors (see Table 6-1, Q.6) focussing the purpose of the initiative and informing their role (see Table 6-2, Q.16). This same level of clarity around the intent of the program was not however shared by the Year 8 to Year 12 mentee cohorts (see Table 5-1, Q.4). Clarity of program aims for both stakeholder groups – to ensure a shared understanding of the intent of the initiative and the role they play in it – is thus tabled.

3. Dosage of Mentoring Activity

The combination of the daily 8-minute morning contact with the mentor and other mentees in the Learning Mentor Group and the weekly 72-minute scheduled Learning Mentor period was recognised as a key feature of the initiative by stakeholders (see Table 5-1, Q.9; Table 6-1, Q.11; Table 6-7), supporting ongoing relational development between mentor and mentee and between mentees.
4. **Mixed Year Level Learning Mentor Groups**

The mixed year level composition of the Learning Mentor Groups was recognised as enabling and promoting both peer and cross-age mentoring during the designated daily and weekly contact periods of the program. This opportunity was utilised in particular by Year 7-10 mentees (see Table 5-7, Q.26) and identified as a key practice encouraged by mentors (see Table 6-4, Q.27) in their Learning Mentor Groups.

5. **Program Structure and Content**

*Mentees:* Whilst specific content and activities focused on students ‘knowing themselves as learners’ were developed for delivery in the weekly 72-minute Learning Mentor Group lesson, all Year Level cohorts registered the preference for this time to be devoted to the completion of homework or assessment tasks, private study, accessing assistance or in dialogue with the Learning Mentor (see Appendix 17, Table 3). The program content was seen as additional to their subject workload and not relevant for students in Years 8 to 12 (see Table 5-1, Q.8).

*Learning Mentors:* For program content and activities to have relevance to mentees and impact on the improvement of learning outcomes, sub-programs differentiated by year level that respond to the learning stage and specific needs of each cohort were identified by mentors as a key pillar of program design and a requisite for engaging mentees (see Table 6-7; Appendix 23, Q.18 (b) and Q.39 (b); Q.41; Table 6-7). In summary, Program design needs to enable the stated anticipated outcomes to be met.

6. **Mentor Preparation (Minor Finding)**

Within the program parameter of stakeholder preparation plans, mentors identified the need to include a requirement for employees to complete a defined mentor training program prior to taking up a mentoring role within the learning facility. This would enable potential mentors (teacher or non-teacher) to demonstrate and therefore be cognizant of the preliminary skills and attitudes required for effective mentoring within a school setting (see Table 6-2, Q.14; Table 6-7). The assumption that all employees can fill such a role is thus challenged.
7. Performance Monitoring Structure (Minor Finding)

The development and implementation of a performance monitoring system for Learning Mentors and Learning Community Leaders was identified as an essential program parameter by teacher mentors only (see Table 6-7; Appendix 23, Q.41 and Q.42). This was proposed as a means of tracking the degree of equity of experience and outcome for mentees within and across Learning Mentor Groups and across Learning Communities in a whole-school approach.

What is identified as key to the provision of a whole school approach to the mentoring of learners through a school-based Learning Mentor Program is the development of a purpose-built school organisational frame to house the initiative - one that reflects and has the capacity to promote program intent. It is within this frame that other mobilising elements are allocated, including a dosage of mentoring activity that supports ongoing relational development and activity foci that best serve each cohort within the intended audience on an ongoing basis.

7.1.2 Relational Factors

The two relational conditions identified as central to the experience follow; one relates to interpersonality and the other to base unit environmental influences.

1. Relational Trust

The building and sustaining of trusting mentee/mentor relationships was recognised by both stakeholder groups as key to the initiative and for mentors, their program priority (see Table 6-3, Q.20; Table 6-4, Q.26; Table 6-7; Appendix 23, Q.18 (a) and Q.40). Potentially as a result of this priority, all six cohorts of mentee participants both experienced (see Table 5-4, Q.12, Q.16-19) and in general valued greater social, emotional and identity support from their mentor through the Program over specific support to improve learning outcomes (see Table 5-4, Q.12, Q.16-19; Appendix 17, Table 2).

2. Mentoring Environment

The sub-structures of each Learning Community (i.e. the Learning Mentor Group) were acknowledged by both sets of stakeholders as providing caring, supportive and encouraging environments for mentees (see Table 5-7, Q.25; Appendix 17, Table 3;
Table 6-4, Q.26) and spaces where mentors were readily available to give advice and assistance as required (see Table 5-4, Q.16; Appendix 17, Table 1, Table 3). It is within these environments that mentees connect to a significant adult (the mentor) who advocates for and recognises the achievements of the individual throughout the duration of the dyad (see Table 6-3, Q.19 and Q.22; Table 6-7). The mixed year level composition of each Learning Mentor Group was recognised by mentees as enabling them to get to know and develop relationships with cross-age peers (Appendix 17, Table 3).

These findings evidence that ongoing relational development within supportive environments is the ‘active ingredient’ of mentoring within school-based settings (Bayer et al. 2015).

7.2 SECTION 2: DIFFERENCES OF EXPERIENCE: STUDENTS

This section of the chapter summarises any key differences in experience of the Program that presented for students in terms of Year Level and gender groupings.

7.2.1 Year Level Differences

Research Sub-Question: Do experiences differ for students at different Year Levels?

Year 7 participants’ experiences of the Program differed in a number of areas to the other five cohorts. Unlike for other Year Levels, the aims of the Program were clear to Year 7 mentees (see Table 5-1, Q.4) and they were in agreement that an appropriate mix of learning and community activities were offered within the Program (see Table 5-1, Q.7). In addition, this group of participants recognised the role of the mentor in supporting them to improve learning outcomes and learning confidence (see Table 5-4, Q.14, Q.15 and Q.21). Recognition of program impacts also differed to other Year Levels. Increased learning independence, use of different learning strategies and improved organisational, communication and teamwork skills were registered as Program outcomes for this cohort (see Table 5-7, Q.28, Q.29, Q.31, Q.32 and Q.34). These experience trends were not evident in any other Year Level data.
7.2.2 Gender Differences

**Research Sub-Question:** Do experiences differ for male and female student cohorts?

Whilst a number of male gender trends were identified in the data, the only observation that deviated considerably from that mapped in the Year Level data was Program impact on *improved communication skills* for Year 12 males. This gender cohort recognised through their agreement response rate that improved communication skills were an outcome from Program participation.

The female gender trends presenting did not differ substantially from the Year Level trends for the same cohort sets (see Table 5-7, Q.30 and Q.33; Table 5-9).

These findings indicate that the key experience differences within student stakeholder groups lay within the Year Level sub-groups rather than in gender sub-groups. The Year 7 cohort experienced the mentoring program differently on a number of fronts to the other Year Level cohorts, but most significantly in terms of the learning outcomes of the initiative.

7.3 SECTION 3: DIFFERENCES OF EXPERIENCE: LEARNING MENTORS

This section of the chapter summarises any key differences of experience of the Program presenting for mentor sub-groups.

7.3.1 Teacher Mentor and Non-Teacher Mentor Differences

**Research Sub-Question:** Do experiences differ for teacher and non-teacher Learning Mentors?

Differences of experience of the Learning Mentor Program were evident between the non-teacher mentor and teacher mentor cohorts of participants. An outcome from the mentoring experience for non-teacher mentors was knowing how their mentees learn best (see Table 6-3, Q.21). In addition, there was recognition by this sub-group that the Program activities and content delivered in the weekly, long Learning Mentor Period were interesting, relevant to Program intent (see Table 6-1, Q.10) and supported the development of mentees’ learning independence and teamwork skills
(see Table 6-4, Q.29 and Q.33). Non-teacher mentors also recognised that the Program helped motivate students to improve their own learning (see Table 6-4, Q.38). These experience trends were not evident in the teacher mentor data. Furthermore, unlike teacher mentors, non-teacher mentors affirmed that the Program had met their expectations (see Table 6-1, Q.7) and that it was an important part of their weekly work schedule (see Table 6-4, Q.25). In terms of the change data submitted, there was no reference to the implementation of performance accountability measures for Learning Community Leaders and Learning Mentors in any non-teaching mentor data (see Appendix 23, Q.41 and Q.42).

Differences of experience of the Learning Mentor Program were also evident within the teacher mentor responses and these differences will be identified in the next two sub-sections.

7.3.2 Occupation of Leadership Role or No Leadership Role Differences

Research Sub-Question: Do experiences differ for teacher mentors occupying leadership roles to teacher mentors not in leadership roles?

Teacher mentors in leadership roles registered that they often reflect on their effectiveness as a mentor (see Table 6-2, Q. 17) and considered the extended Learning Mentor Period to be an important part of their weekly schedule of classes (see Table 6-4, Q.25). In addition, there was recognition by this sub-group that the activities completed within the Program helped mentees to consolidate relationships within the Learning Mentor Group (see Table 6-3, Q.24), become more independent learners, and set learning goals (see Table 6-4, Q.29 and Q.34). Leader teacher mentors also acknowledged that the Program activities supported mentees to understand how they learn best (see Table 6-4, Q.28). These experience trends were not evident in the non-leader teacher mentor responses.

7.3.3 Years of Teaching Experience Differences

Research Sub-Question: Do experiences differ for teacher mentors with more than 10 years teaching experience to those with less than or equal to 10 years teaching experience?
Two key differences of experience emerged from the data from these sub-groups. Teacher mentors with more than 10 years of teaching experience registered that they often reflect on their effectiveness as a mentor (see Table 6-2, Q. 17). This response trend was not evident in the partner sub-group data. The second difference emerged from teacher mentors with less than or equal to 10 years of teaching experience, with this cohort of respondents recognising that the activities completed in the Learning Mentor Program helped mentees to consolidate relationships within their Learning Mentor Group (see Table 6-3, Q.24). This response trend was not evident in the more than 10 years teaching experience sub-group data set.

The sub-group differences of experience mapped in 7.3.1, 7.3.2 and 7.3.3 recognise that whilst non-teacher mentors experience the Learning Mentor Program differently to teacher mentors on a number of fronts, there are also differences of experience within the teacher mentor cohort; this is particularly evident between teacher mentors in leadership roles and those that are not. In addition, there are two common response trends between non-teacher mentors and teacher mentors in leadership roles, with both subgroups considering the extended Learning Mentor Period to be an important part of their weekly work schedule (see Table 6-4, Q.25) and recognising the influence Program activities have on supporting mentees to become more independent learners (see Table 6-4, Q.29).

7.4 SUMMATION OF FINDINGS

The findings indicate that there are a number of program parameter and relational factors that influence the experience of participants in a school-based mentoring initiative delivered through a whole-school approach. These factors in turn influence outcomes for the stakeholder groups.

The key program parameters identified were: the specifically designed school organisational frame housing and facilitating the initiative, the dosage and frequency of the mentoring activity, and the mixed year level composition of the base unit of the organisational frame, i.e. the Learning Mentor Group. Program parameters identified that would contribute to and strengthen the experience were: clarity of program aims for both stakeholder groups; differentiated program content that responded to the learning stage and needs of each year level cohort or a program focused on supporting mentees’ individual subject workload; a defined mentor
training program prior to role occupancy, and the inclusion of a performance monitoring system for mentors and Learning Community Leaders.

In terms of relational factors, experiencing the development of mentee/mentor relational trust within the caring, supportive and encouraging environment of the Learning Mentor Group was identified as key to the initiative by both stakeholder groups and the priority of mentors. An outcome of this priority was the delivery of social, emotional and identity support over learning support, which was both recognised and valued by mentees. It makes sense that once relational trust is established, then a more targeted support of mentees as learners could be enabled in a variety of ways across a diversity of fields.

In addition to program parameter and relational factors, other considerations in developing programs of this nature surfaced. The Year 7 mentee cohort and non-teacher mentors experienced the Program differently to their respective stakeholder groups, particularly in relation to the recognition of improvement in learning outcomes. In addition, within the teacher mentor respondent groups, teacher mentors in leadership roles experienced the programme differently on a number of fronts to their partner sub-group and aligned with the experiences of non-teacher mentors on others. What causes the variance and the concurrence? In terms of the Year 7 cohort, is it related to stage of schooling (i.e. first year of secondary education and the perceived or actual demands of their new learning context)? In terms of non-teacher mentors, does the difference in focus of their mentoring work from their daily employment routine impact their experience? Does occupation of a leadership position within a learning organisation influence outcomes through positionality because of an inbuilt loyalty to the firm to promote the initiative?

In the final chapter of this thesis, Chapter 8, the findings presented in this chapter will be discussed in relation to the research questions and to the research field in which this study is immersed.
CHAPTER 8 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this final chapter of the thesis, the findings presented in Chapter 7 are discussed in relation to the research questions and to the associated research field. In addition, key contributions to the practice of school-based mentoring emerging from the inquiry are identified as well as the limitations of the study and implications for further research. The thesis concludes with a closing comment and a final comment from each of the two stakeholder groups.

8.1 DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

8.1.1 Research Question: What factors influence the experience of participants in a school-based mentoring program delivered through a whole-school approach?

As detailed in Chapter 7, a number of program parameter and relational factors influence the experience of participants in this extended interpretation of a school-based mentoring program. However, these two fields will not be discussed independently of each other, as the findings indicate they influence each other. All discussion requires a starting point and in this instance the starting point will be the influence of the program parameter ‘infrastructure’.

The school organisational frame specifically designed for the Learning Mentor Program enabled and promoted the development of supportive relationships for both mentees and mentors. The frame, consisting of six Learning Communities subdivided into seven Learning Mentor Groups (LMGs), models a version of the school-within-a-school or SWAS arrangement (Dewees 1999) but without the license of total autonomy, and reflects the nature of the group loyalty it aims to support both in title and operation. Having each Learning Mentor Group composed of 26 students drawn from each of the six Year Levels facilitates and promotes opportunities for both peer and cross-age mentoring during the designated daily and weekly contact periods of the program, thus layering and dispersing support. In addition, the mixed year level composition of each group nurtures relational development with cross-age
peers, which in turn contributes to the provision of a caring, supportive and encouraging environment for mentees.

Dosage of mentoring activity also influences experience. In this study, dosage is the sum of a daily 8-minute morning contact session with the Learning Mentor and members of the Learning Mentor Group, and an extended weekly contact period of 72 minutes. Since this weekly allocation of 1.9 hours occurs over a 40-week school year potentially for the duration of the 6-year schooling period, the opportunity for accumulation of relationship intensity between mentor and mentee is also facilitated. In addition, contact between mentor and mentee has the opportunity to occur informally across a school day or through a scheduled subject class because of the site-based nature of the Program. Thus the structural limitations on contact identified as a limitation of traditional school-based models by Portwood & Ayers (2005) are addressed in this approach. Herrera et al. (2000) in their study of relationship development in traditional community-based and school-based mentoring programs identified relationship intensity (i.e. increased frequency of contact) as influencing improved student outcomes. Furthermore, Grossman et al. (2012) found in their study of the influence of match duration and re-matching on school-based mentoring effectiveness that “it is not simply the presence or absence of a mentor that makes a difference, but the longevity of the match. It is only in the context of enduring, intact school-based mentoring that youth make gains” (p. 53). It could be argued that these critical masses of a mentoring experience i.e. frequency of contact, and where practically possible, match longevity are also accommodated in this Program between mentees, but with duration of the relationship dependent on mentee stage of schooling.

When considering program content for initiatives of this nature, mentee voice signals the need to focus any activity on aspects that directly assist their learning in some way, e.g. completion of homework or assessment tasks or private study for upcoming examination periods or subject tests etc., with support accessible from the Learning Mentor or other mentees as required (see Chapter 5, pp. 17-18 and p. 20; Appendix 17, Tables 3 and 4). The delivery of a specific curriculum, which in this Program is focussed on ‘students knowing themselves as learner’, is interpreted as additional to what the mentee perceives to be their current core business, and for students after Year 7, it is seen as somewhat irrelevant. Herrera et al. (2000) confirm that in
traditional school-based programs mentors can help improve the academic performance of the mentee though a direct focus on academic activity, e.g. homework completion. An area for further study is thus signalled within this full-school approach to investigate the impact that a direct focus on academic tasks (as determined by the learner and supported by the mentor and other mentees within the Learning Mentor Group) has on improving academic performance. In addition, to accommodate the non-teacher background of some mentors, consideration could be given to broadening the support net of expertise for mentees through the nomination of key learning area or subject-specific mentors (e.g. Physics or Mathematics experts), particularly as students move through their final two years of schooling. This would not replace the existing frame of operation but complement it, and in doing so better recognise the diversity of student learning needs within and across Year Levels.

Mentor voice, on the other hand, signals the need to develop relevant, Year Level differentiated sub-programs that respond to the learning stage and specific needs of each cohort (Table 6-1, Question 10; Appendix 23, Tables 2, 4 and 6). Since relevancy has been identified as a key driver of student engagement influencing achievement levels (Edwards 2013), it makes sense that future Program content development be informed by both mentee and mentor voice in order to maximise outcomes within the collaborative context of the initiative.

Whilst the Years 8-12 participatory cohorts did not have great clarity around the aims of the program, in many ways all cohorts of mentees have created their own program intent through their valuing of the experience of social, emotional and identity support from the mentor over specific support to improve learning outcomes. This aligns with, and is no doubt influenced by, the work emphasis of the mentors who see the building and sustaining of trusting relationships with their mentees as their program priority. However, when mentors provide for mentees “a nurturing positive milieu” where “sustained high-quality skill building relationships exist” (Lerner, Napolitano, Boyd, Mueller and Callina 2014, p. 17) development across a number of fields is facilitated. In addition, in this context, if clarity of purpose and direction is shared across stakeholder groups combined with a revision of program content and activity, this may also influence more directly the progression of learning outcomes for mentees.
Other Factors

Although a minor finding from this inquiry, the inclusion of a defined mentor training program prior to role occupancy was identified by mentors as an important parameter of this stakeholder groups preparation plan. Mentor training is nominated as a key standard required of high quality mentoring programs, whose purpose is to clarify expectations and foster the skills required to build effective mentoring relationships (MENTOR, 2009; DuBois et al. 2002). What is to be determined however are the specific elements of a robust training program for this type of context. The following topics forwarded by MENTOR (2009) as suggestions for traditional school-based mentoring training also apply to this inquiry context and approach: adolescent development, communication techniques, boundaries and role clarification, anticipated challenges and realistic expectations, suspected abuse/neglect, confidentiality and effective mentoring strategies. However, because of the heterogeneous audience each mentor aims to serve and the differences in mentor background (i.e. teachers and non-teachers), there may be other elements to include in a training program that are yet to be identified. This presents another area to be explored into extended interpretations of school-based mentoring schemes. It is to be noted that the type of training that makes a difference for mentors and therefore mentees in traditional mentoring schemes is also to be determined through future inquiries (Herrera et al. 2000).

The inclusion of a performance monitoring structure for Learning Mentors and Learning Community Leaders also presented as a minor finding, albeit only in the teacher mentor data. The intent of the inclusion of this program parameter for a whole-school approach is to have some way of tracking the degree of equity of experience for mentees within and across Learning Mentor Groups and across Learning Communities. Clear criteria for monitoring need to be established and understood, and the process implemented at timely intervals for it to serve its purpose. In traditional school-based programs, monitoring and support of mentors is identified as a best practice feature (MENTOR 2009; DuBois et al. 2002), with ongoing professional learning and reflection meetings constituting part of the process (Kamosa-Hawkins 2010).
These major and minor findings, informed by the experiences of the two stakeholder groups, identify the following 8 program features to be considered when implementing a whole-school approach to school-based mentoring:

1. Clarity of program aims for both stakeholder groups i.e. students and mentors - see 7.1.1 (Point 2)

2. An infrastructure or school organisational frame that enables and promotes the intent of the mentoring initiative of improving outcomes for learners within a caring, supportive and nurturing environment - see 7.1.1 (Point 1)

3. A defined mentor training program prior to role occupancy that considers the context, mentor source and the diversity of needs of the learners it aims to serve – see 7.1.1 (Point 6)

4. A dosage of mentoring opportunity that accommodates accumulation of relational intensity and the opportunity for the development of strong, trusting mentor-mentee, peer and cross-age relationships – see 7.1.1 (Point 3)

5. A monitoring structure to track both mentor and Learning Community Leader performance within the program - see 7.1.1 (Point 7)

6. Mixed year level compositions of the base unit of the model to enable and promote both peer and cross-age mentoring – see 7.1.1 (Point 4)

7. Program content and activities that directly support mentee learning in some way, whether that be allocation of time for completion of learning tasks within a supported environment or involvement in sub-programs differentiated by year level to meet the specific needs of the cohort – see 7.1.1 (Point 5)

8. Program design focus that promotes ongoing relational development as an enabling influence on academic development – see 7.1.2 (Point 1/Point 2)

It is to be noted that infrastructure, contact dosage, structured activities relating to the aims of the program, and mentor training, support and monitoring, have been identified as best practice features in previous research into traditional school-based one-to-one mentoring programs by MENTOR (2009) and DuBois et al. (2002). These features are also key to this whole-school approach that employs both one-to-one and group mentoring.
An additional program feature specific to a whole-school approach identified by this study is the mixed year level composition of the Learning Mentor Groups. This is significant feature of the organisational frame of the Learning Mentor Program because of the mentee support structures it enables and promotes within the Learning Mentor Group.

8.1.2 Research Sub-Question: Do experiences differ for students at different Year Levels?

The study identified that the Year 7 group experiences the program differently to the other five Year Levels. This cohort registered they were cognizant of program intent and were the beneficiaries of learning impacts as a result of program participation and the mentoring experience. Improved organisational, communication and teamwork skills were also identified as significant outcomes. Since these experience trends were not evident in the other year level data, it raises the question as to whether any differences are influenced by phase of secondary schooling, and within that, whether the role the Learning Mentor Program plays as a significant transition approach for this cohort. Transitioning from a primary to secondary schooling context is recognised as a disruptive process. There are major changes in school structure, composition of peer group and student-teacher relationships. In addition, as Hanewald (2013, p. 64) notes, “there is increased expectation of independent academic performance and less teacher scaffolding”. In summary, the environments in which the learners are now immersed are challenging, not only structurally and academically but also socially; therefore, it makes sense that in this study there are variabilities in experience because of the transition phase the Year 7 cohort are navigating.

Like the other five year level cohorts in the study, Year 7 also recognise the caring, supportive and encouraging environment provided by both the Learning Mentor and other peer and cross-age mentees within the Learning Mentor Group, the base unit of the program. In line with the thinking of Hanewald (2013), the sense of belonging and social connection in a new environment may stabilise and nurture the new secondary learner to take up the challenge and focus on the core business at hand, and that may be why the early recognition of learning and skill development impacts from program participation. There is an argument therefore that it is not only through
teacher support that students in transition phases accrue a positive motivational orientation to school work (Bru, Stornes, Munthe & Thuen 2010; Wentzel 1998), but through a climate of support like that delivered through the Learning Mentor Group within the frame of the Learning Mentor Program. It must be noted that when developing the Program, the part it would play in influencing the transitioning of students from the primary to secondary context was not tabled as a strategic intent of Program design; rather, it has emerged as an outcome from the experiences of the Year 7 stakeholder group. Ganeson and Ehrich (2009) identify the significant role both peers and teachers play in transition and this is evidenced within this Program.

8.1.3 Research Sub-Question: Do experiences differ for male and female student cohorts?

As noted in Chapter 7, whilst a number of male gender trends were identified in the data, the only observation that deviated considerably from the Year Level data was program impact on improved communication skills for Year 12 males. This gender cohort recognised through their agreement response rate that improved communication skills were an outcome of Program participation.

It is recognised that when positive student-teacher relationships are formed within a classroom setting, students often use this security to explore the setting both academically and socially so as to develop in these areas (Hamre & Pianta 2001). Since the use of effective communication skills is a key social competency and a confirmed basis from which to build a strong social support network, it makes sense that the identified positive relational environment of the program’s Learning Mentor Group infrastructural unit nurtures and promotes an increasing communicative confidence. The question to be asked, however, is why it is presenting only in this particular Year Level gender sub-group. Stage of schooling (and therefore the leadership status and accompanying expectations that it automatically allocates within the mixed year level Learning Mentor Group) could contribute; however, it needs to be further explored within settings of this nature.

There were no female gender trends presenting that differed substantially from Year Level trends for the same cohort sets. Therefore, apart from the gender observation noted earlier, differences of experience were influenced by stage of secondary schooling in preference to gender.
8.1.4 **Research Sub-Question:** Do experiences differ for teacher and non-teacher Learning Mentors?

The study identified that non-teacher mentors experience the Program differently to teacher mentors in a number of ways. As a result of their mentoring role within the Program, non-teacher mentors registered that they were now cognizant of their mentees’ learning styles. This is a learning outcome and evidences that onsite professional learning is delivered indirectly to this sub-group through the initiative. Non-teacher mentors also affirmed that the content and activities delivered through the Program’s CORE curriculum were relevant to their mentee cohorts, supporting the development of communication and teamwork skills and assisting mentees to set learning goals and gain greater learning independence. There was also acknowledgement of the motivational influence of the Program on mentees to improve in their own learning. Finally, non-teacher mentors confirmed that the Program had met their expectations and that it was an important part of their weekly work schedule. As noted in the previous chapter, these experience trends were not evident across the aggregated teacher mentor data.

What contributes to the difference of experience? Is it a function of a more direct connection of non-teacher mentors to the learning activity of the organisation, and the new energy this creates for commitment to Program intent and outcomes? Teacher mentors deliver subject content material and associated activities as their daily business, which is unlike the work routine of non-teacher mentors in schools. Does a significant shift from employment routine and focus therefore impact experience, creating opportunity, challenge and an enhanced self-efficacy to carry out the role? What influence does an invitation to participate in the Program have on non-teacher mentor experiences within the initiative? All teaching staff were allocated mentor roles as part of their teaching load; however, in order to staff all Learning Mentor Groups with 2 mentors, 14 of the 40.2 (FTE) non-teaching staff were also invited to take on a mentoring role by the Principal and the Deputy Principal Student Development and Learning (the Learning Mentor Program Leader). Frequent student contact within the learning facility as well as relational skills, experience and qualifications constituted the selection criteria. Does the selection process harness specific skill and knowledge sets which impact experience? Is there some honour attached to the inclusion creating a motivational influence in
itself? What are the key drivers of the difference? If teaching staff were also invited into a mentoring role based on set criteria, would that impact experience and in turn student outcomes?

The differences experienced by teacher mentors and non-teacher mentors table yet another implication for research. Do outcomes differ for mentees if mentored by a teacher or a non-teacher in a full-school approach within any of the following fields: academic competency, school engagement and connectedness, motivation, self-efficacy or social competence?

Whilst research from traditional community and school-based mentoring programs can inform some aspects of a whole-school approach, the existence of this form now identifies the need to create a quality literature base to respond to the questions posed and those that will be posed in the future.

8.1.5 Research Sub-Question: Do experiences differ for teacher mentors occupying leadership roles and teacher mentors not in leadership roles?

Within the teacher mentor cohort, some differences in experience presented between teacher mentors in leadership roles and those not in leadership roles. Unlike their partner sub-group, leader mentors often reflect on their effectiveness in the mentoring role and consider the extended Learning Mentor Period to be an important part of their weekly schedule of classes. They also recognise that Program activities support mentees to understand how they learn best, become more independent learners, set learning goals and develop better communication skills. In addition, leader mentors considered Program activities helped mentees to consolidate relationships within the Learning Mentor Group. What influences the experience differences between the two teacher mentor sub-groups? Since self-reflection is recognised as key to effective leadership (Miller 2012), it makes sense that leader mentors either consciously or sub-consciously engage in this activity, linking their performance to their potential and subsequent areas for improvement. Leader mentors may have a greater insight and therefore commitment to the change initiative because of their ongoing contributions to Program development through their leadership forums, which in turn impacts experience; or there may be an inbuilt loyalty to the school, delivered through positionality, that influences experience. Since effective school leaders share the vision of the school and therefore
responsibility for its success (Harrison & Killion 2007), it makes sense that status and responsibility in some way impact Program experiences and outcomes. The question is whether this could in turn impact mentee outcomes.

It is interesting to note that some of the leader mentor experience differences align with those of non-teacher mentors. These were the two sub-groups that recognized engagement with the Program activities led to some learning impacts for mentees; in addition, both considered the extended Learning Mentor Period to be an important part of their weekly schedule of classes.

8.1.6  **Research Sub-Question:** Do experiences differ for teacher mentors with more than 10 years teaching experience to those with less than or equal to 10 years teaching experience?

Whilst two differences in experience emerged from the data from this set of sub-groups, it was the least number of differences between any sub-group set, thus suggesting that years of practice within the profession has the least influence on experiences within such settings. The differences identified were:

(a) Teacher mentors with more than 10 years teaching experience often reflect on their effectiveness as a mentor;
(b) Teacher mentors with less than or equal to 10 years teaching experience affirm that Program activities help mentees to consolidate relationships within their Learning Mentor Group.

These trends were not evident in either partner sub-group data. It makes sense that both trends may be related in some way to years of service and through this lens a focus difference: teacher mentors with more than 10 years of teaching experience focussing on the self in order to improve how they serve, whilst those with 10 or less years of experience focussing more directly on those they serve. However, since both differences also registered in the leader mentor data, it also shows that factors other than years of service promote reflective practice and a recognition of the role Program activities play in supporting mentees to consolidate relationships. As noted in 8.1.5, leaders consciously or sub-consciously assume co-responsibility for organisational success through positionality, and since the Learning Mentor Program was a major initiative introduced into the learning organisation requiring the support of all, it makes sense that leader status has in many ways encouraged their response.
The sub-group differences in experience mapped and discussed in 8.1.4, 8.1.5 and 8.1.6 also highlight some commonalities, particularly between teacher leader mentors and non-teacher mentors. A possibility is that the non-teacher mentor cohort are essentially leaders in a broad sense because of their selection into the role, which in turn influences experience and explains alignment in some way to the leader mentor cohort. Nevertheless, the reality is the experience mix of the mentor stakeholder groups and their sub-groups does not appear to be overtly impacting the experiences of mentees, since student differences lie essentially with stage of schooling in preference to across stages. This remains another area for closer investigation.

8.2 KEY CONTRIBUTIONS TO NEW KNOWLEDGE

A key contribution to new knowledge identified by this study is the study itself. As an extended interpretation of a school-based mentoring program, it offers insight into what factors influence the experience of both stakeholder groups when a mentoring program is delivered through a whole-school approach. Ehrich et al. (2004) recognise that few studies have sought mentor experience within traditional school-based schemes, so in this extended format the record of mentor experience is also substantial new knowledge. In addition, since the response rates to the online questionnaires by both students and mentors was significant (i.e. 657 students and 58 mentors; see Chapter 4, Table 4-7), the conclusion validity of the study is assured.

The findings from the stakeholder experiences also table a conceptual contribution to the “mentoring-as-relationship” and “mentoring-as-context” debate. Whilst these theoretical mentoring models are currently considered to be competing perspectives (Bayer et al. 2015), this study contributes to the debate in that a whole school approach to the practice finds merit in both. The Learning Mentor Program in action provides a space for skill development through the CORE activities and mentee determined tasks and through formal, informal and peer-to-peer mentoring - all fuelled through a trusting relational frame. It is recognised therefore that the “mentoring-as-relationship” and “mentoring-as-context” perspectives are neither competing nor isolated within this environment but rather interplay in a variety of ways to deliver outcomes for students as ‘learners’ in a broader sense.
**Other Contributions**

The following 8 key features of a school-based mentoring program delivered through a whole-school approach were identified through this study:

(a) Clarity of program aims for both stakeholder groups

(b) Mentor-mentee contact dosage that accommodates relational intensity

(c) A defined mentor training program

(d) Mentor monitoring structures

(e) A program focus that supports ongoing relational development as an enabling influence on academic development

(f) A school organisational frame that facilitates and promotes program intent

(g) Mixed year level mentoring groups

(h) Program activity that directly supports mentee learning or other mentee-identified priorities

Since this approach to mentoring students shares common key features to traditional school-based programs (particularly in terms of the first five elements listed), the importance of these elements in student mentoring programs is further re-inforced as they have once again emerged, but within a different operational context. New knowledge for the school-based mentoring field is once again tabled. Furthermore, whole-school approaches serve as an effective transition program for students moving into the first phase of secondary schooling by cultivating through the sub-structures a sense of belonging and social connection to the new learning environment. Also, a mixed year level composition of the base unit of a school-based mentoring model influences relational outcomes for mentees and promotes both peer and cross-age mentoring within such settings, while differences of experience of the Program by the student stakeholder group are influenced by stage of secondary schooling in preference to gender. Finally, students value the social, emotional and identity support from the mentor over specific support to improve learning outcomes in programs of this nature.
8.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although this study has significant strengths, it also has some limitations. Firstly, there was no opportunity for mentors or mentees to indicate (either on a scale or otherwise) their perception of the degree of ‘closeness’ of the mentoring relationship. Since the Year 7 cohort were the only group that clearly recognised the role of the mentor in supporting mentees to improve learning outcomes and learning confidence, data of this nature would have contributed another layer to the debate on the level of influence ‘mentoring-as-context’ and ‘mentoring-as-relationship’ (Bayer et al. 2015) have on mentee learning outcomes within a whole-school approach. Secondly, since this inquiry is not a longitudinal cohort study, program impacts over time on the same individuals from both teacher mentor and non-teacher mentor stakeholder groups are not available, and this is a limiting factor. Another issue is that mentoring activity within the Learning Mentor Program is not grounded within any relationship-based theory(s), and therefore the influence of a particular way of developing relationships with mentees is a factor that cannot be ascertained from the inquiry. Thirdly, organisational impacts were not investigated. If included as a ‘third stakeholder group’, a broader landscape to ascertain Program impacts would open and strengthen the study. Impacts of the mentoring styles of group and classical approaches were not considered in the study either, nor was the difference between a single or a combined method approach and how they influence outcomes for stakeholder groups.

8.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The findings from this study have inspired new questions that could lead to further research into whole-school approaches to school-based mentoring. These questions have essentially assumed quite different research trajectories. Since this inquiry investigates the experiences of stakeholder groups within an extended interpretation of the practice, it makes sense that the new questions arise out of the specific differences to the traditional form, particularly in terms of mentee cohort, mentor source and program design. This shows the need to continue to explore this fertile research space to further unpack the impacts of such an initiative. Key questions emerging from the study are:
1. What aspects of the relational experience are most influential in building and sustaining trust between mentor and mentee in whole-school approaches to mentoring? What factors hinder development within such contexts?

2. What level of involvement of parents/guardians in the mentoring experience/program impacts student outcomes? What hinders or has the potential to hinder progression within such contexts?

3. What are the key elements of a robust mentor training program for mentoring initiatives that are school-based, operate as a whole-school approach and draw mentors solely from the employees of the learning facility?

4. What is the impact of a school-based mentoring program delivered through a whole school approach on improved academic performance, when the focus of program activity is devoted to the completion of academic tasks as determined by the learner and supported by the mentor and other mentees either within or across Learning Mentor Groups?

5. What program factors influence improved communication skills in Year 12 males in this study of a whole-school approach to mentoring?

6. Do learning outcomes differ for mentees if mentored by a teacher or a non-teacher in a whole-school approach?

In addition, the research field would benefit from a longitudinal study of the experiences of a Year Level cohort within the Program, from entry into secondary schooling in Year 7 to exit point in Year 12. This would “describe patterns of change and establish the direction and magnitude of causal relationships” (Menard 2002, p. 4) thus enabling better understanding of the key influences of the practice. Wheeler, Keller and DuBois (2010, p. 16) also call for investigations of innovative approaches to include an examination of “the role of program fidelity as a moderator of effectiveness”.

8.5 CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Since many mentoring relationships form naturally anyway within the social context of school settings between students and significant adults (i.e. teachers or other employees; Herrera & Karcher 2014; DuBois & Silverthorn 2005a), it makes sense that consideration is given to formalising this opportunity for all students. This case
study provides one example of what this opportunity can look like in a Year 7-12 Australian secondary school setting and the experiences that result.

As currently there is an absence in the research space of formally documented studies of extended interpretations of school-based mentoring programs and practices that include all students, this study of a whole-school mentoring program – where mentoring is intentionally used as a promotion strategy rather than an intervention strategy, and where all mentors are drawn from the staff of the learning facility itself – contributes new knowledge to its field, and in doing so identifies many yet-to-be-chartered investigative paths. The inquiry also contributes to the process of determining the level of efficacy of whole-school approaches in promoting outcomes for adolescent cohorts in their final stages of schooling through the lens of stakeholder groups’ experiences. A closing comment from each of the stakeholder groups concludes this dissertation:

The best thing about the Learning Mentor Program is being able to bond with my Learning Mentor and having them there whenever I need them. It's good knowing that there's someone there for me at all times, who won't give up on me and who will help me achieve anything and everything. *(Year 9 Student)*

The Learning Mentor Program is a fantastic idea that is still in its infancy of implementation. It needs however for the village to keep its eye on continuing to raise the child so the longer term benefits are truly known. *(Learning Mentor – Teacher)*

The *village*, in the broader context, is the research community in which this study is immersed.
REFERENCES


The College (2013). *The College annual personnel budget: 2013*


APPENDICES

To Note

In Appendices 7, 8, 9, 11 and 12, the project title of this study has been stated as:

*Mentoring learners for improved outcomes in a Victorian secondary college*

This was formally changed in the Deakin University annual review process to more appropriately reflect the research focus once the project had progressed. The title of the study is:

*A whole-school approach to mentoring students: An Australian secondary school case study*

In addition, the statement of the purpose of the research also changed from an investigation into:

‘What impact does a school-based mentoring program which is focussed on supporting, developing and promoting the learning life of each student at the College, have on students and their learning?’ to:

‘What factors influence the experience of participants in a school-based mentoring program delivered through a whole-school approach?’, in order to give greater clarity around the intent of the inquiry.

And finally, in Appendix 9 (Plain Language Statement, Organisational Consent Form and Withdrawal of Consent Form: Principal), permission was sought to collect data from parents. Whilst 48 parents completed an online questionnaire, these data are not included in the final analysis.
APPENDIX 1: Learning Community Leader Role Description

Leadership Level: Level 2 - $9,000 (Indexed Annually)
Time Release: 7 periods release per week

Purpose of Position

Given that student outcomes are largely influenced by the expertise of the teacher, a Learning Community Leader will ensure that each teacher in their Learning Community has the necessary resources, knowledge and professional will to support students in maximising their learning potential. A Learning Community Leader recognises that the relationship between learners and between teacher and learner is at the heart of learning excellence.

In 2010, this Leader will work with their community of Learning Mentors to develop the identity of their Learning Community. From 2011, they will be responsible for the effective delivery of the CORE curriculum of the Program.

Each Learning Community Leader will also be assigned a portfolio of operational duties in order to support the horizontal needs of the College.

Students learn best when they are healthy, safe, welcomed, valued, connected to school and when they know and understand themselves as a learner.

Scope and Emphases of Role

1. Leadership

Learning Mentors

- To improve student outcomes, a Learning Community Leader will:
- Influence and empower the staff in their Learning Community to embrace continuous self-improvement
- Influence and empower staff in their Learning Community to embrace continuous improvement in their student management practices
- Ensure that Learning Mentors are the first point of contact for families and teachers and provide the appropriate support to enable this to happen
- Inform the Learning Support Leader of progress and/or issues associated with students identified with special needs
- Model just, fair and consistent practices in the management of students
• Build the resilience and capacity of teachers to deal with difficult situations through skill development and offering time and support when required
• Ensure that Learning Mentors have the necessary information about a student’s well being to enable them to effectively mentor the student
• Follow the College Case Management Policy and Protocols

**Students and their Families**

To improve student outcomes, a Learning Community Leader will:

• Enhance the students’ connectedness to their Learning Community and to the College
• Be an active presence amongst the students showing care and concern for their academic progress and wellbeing
• Ensure that issues causing concern/stress are dealt with in a timely and effective manner
• Model the use of a variety of strategies such as student/teacher contracts, mediation and referral
• Provide an environment that is characterised by justice, integrity, honesty and compassion
• Create opportunities that promote social and environmental responsibility
• Ensure that students who have been absent from their Learning Community for prolonged periods of time, or who have been isolated from the school for varying reasons, are successfully integrated back into the school community.

2. Management

* A Learning Community Leader will:

• Organize the development of the physical environment of their Learning Community area
• Foster intercommunity competition
• Ensure that all of the Behavioural Management Policy is enacted
• Maintain accurate records of Learning Community business including, uniform infringements, detention, locker allocations and suspensions;
• Assist the Registrar with the transition of students into the Learning Community
• Follow up on any damage to lockers or areas used regularly by the Learning Community
• Organize and manage any events particular to the Learning Community
3. Organizational Relationships

A Learning Community Leader will be:

- Accountable to the Deputy Principal - Student Development and Learning
- Required to work in a highly collaborative environment with their community of Learning Mentors and with other Learning Community Leaders
- Expected to liaise with the Business Manager, Organisational Leader and Office staff
- Expected to liaise with Wellbeing, Careers and Pathways staff and relevant Curriculum Leaders as needed

4. Memberships

A Learning Community Leader will be a member of:

- The College Learning Community Leaders Tea
- Portfolio related Teams
- Any other ad hoc or standing group established to further improve student learning and student management at the College

5. Relevant College Documents and Policies

A Learning Community Leader will be cognizant of and conversant with the following College documents:

- College Vision Statement
- All policies that relate to teaching and learning and to student management

6. Key Selection Criteria

A successful candidate will demonstrate through evidence:

- An understanding of and commitment to the Vision of the College and all educational directions adopted by the College.
- Outstanding leadership that is characterised by a desire for continuous improvement, critical thinking, and innovation.
- That they are enabling in character, sharing knowledge and skills to nurture the professional growth of others.
- Strong organisational skills.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills such as empathy, listening and timely action.
- A capacity to work effectively independently and interdependently especially in the face of changing priorities, deadlines and pressures.
- Excellence with regard to student management.
• Integrity, honor and courage.
• A desire to serve rather than be served evidenced by a strong work ethic and an ability to delegate in order to spread workload, to provide opportunities for professional growth and to enable the talents and wisdom of others to positively effect teaching and learning.
• A commitment to, and the modelling of, lifelong learning.
• A solid understanding of the place of research within a learning organization.

“When learning is the preoccupation of the school, when all the school’s educators examine their efforts and initiatives through the lens of the impact on learning, then the structure and culture of the school begins to change in substantive ways” (Dufour, 2002, p. 15).
APPENDIX 2: Learning Mentor Role Description

Purpose of Position

Students learn best when:

- They are healthy, safe, welcomed, valued and connected to school
- They know and understand themselves as learners
- Their parents are connected and involved in their learning

The Learning Mentor will be responsible for establishing a relationship with a group of about 13 students. This relationship is based on understanding each student as a learner, and supporting them to better understand their individual learning skills and learning styles better. The primary role is to monitor and support each student with an emphasis on improving educational outcomes through encouragement and intervention.

To facilitate connectedness to the College community, each Learning Mentor will work in partnership with another Learning Mentor within a Learning Mentor Group. A Learning Mentor Group will consist of students from Years 7-12 and belong to one of six Learning Communities.

Relationship with the Student

To ensure that all students come to know themselves as learners, the Learning Mentor will:

- Support the students to set, monitor and reflect upon goals
- Ensure the students engage with the Learning Mentor Program CORE curriculum
- Assist with the implementation of the Learning Mentor Program
- Review their mentees’ reports from the previous year to identify learning areas that should be a focus for improvement and also the subject teachers who should be contacted to monitor progress
- Utilise information from reports, testing and subject teachers to inform the development of strategies and/or plans to improve student learning
- Meet regularly with their students to discuss and monitor their learning
- Model and develop effective communication skills
- Facilitate access to specific services as required e.g. Wellbeing and Careers
- Support decision-making such as subject selections
- Inform the Learning Support Leader of progress and/or issues associated with special needs students
- Provide general advice and direction about lockers, diaries and uniform
- Attend Parent Support Group (PSG) meetings with students who are identified with special needs
Relationship with Families

To improve student outcomes and strengthen the engagement of parents in the learning life of their son or daughter the Learning Mentor will:

- Be the first point of contact for parents to discuss concerns and to celebrate achievements of the students in their Learning Mentor Group.
- Meet with students and their families to discuss student progress. The expectations for family contact are as follows:
  - Make email or phone contact within the first five weeks of Term 1 of each year unless directed otherwise by your Learning Community Leader
  - Email or phone contact with each family to provide general and/or specific feedback about student wellbeing and academic progress
  - Provide feedback monthly, at a minimum, to families with a student who has high needs
- Be directly responsible in organizing formal family interviews as directed by the Deputy Principal or Learning Community Leader.

Relationship with a Learning Community

To ensure students feel connected to their Learning Community, the Learning Mentor will:

- Work to establish a supportive Learning Mentor Group characterized by the development of healthy relationships that enhance the learning of all individuals.
- Support the Learning Community Leader to establish a functioning Learning Community characterized by a shared vision and values.
- Be involved in or organize Learning Community events, activities and initiatives.
- Work with the Learning Community Leader to refine, improve and strengthen the Learning Mentor Program.
- Be involved in assisting with the successful transition of new students and families into Catholic College.
- Be involved in assisting existing students into successive year levels.

Relationship with Subject Teachers

- To ensure that we develop students as learners and improve educational outcomes, the Learning Mentor will monitor student progress across all subject areas and communicate with subject teachers when necessary.

Management of Specific Issues

Given that the Learning Mentor will have a good knowledge of each student in their group, they are best placed to manage many specific issues as they emerge, supported by their Community Leader. The Learning Mentor will:

- Monitor student attendance and seek explanations when necessary. Note: Learning Mentors can put a student on formal lunchtime detention if they are regularly late to Learning Mentor without a reasonable explanation.
• Ensure correct uniform is worn. Note: Learning Mentors can put a student on formal lunchtime detention if the student is not wearing correct school uniform.
• Ensure work requirements are met and support the student to meet work requirements or communicate difficulties to the relevant people.
• Work with the student in the event of disruptive or unacceptable behavior and liaise with the Learning Community Leader as necessary.

Organizational Relationships

Learning Mentors are:

• Accountable to their Community Leader
• Required to work collaboratively within a Learning Community
• Required to work collaboratively with all staff

To assist Learning Mentors fulfill their specific responsibilities, a time allowance is factored into their work schedules. For fulltime teaching staff, there are no allocated extras and non-teaching staff receive time in lieu.

Relevant College Documents and Policies

Learning Mentors will know of and understand the following College documents:

• Catholic College Learning Mentor Program
• Student Management Policy

Memberships

A Learning Mentor will be a member of a Learning Community.

“When learning is the preoccupation of the school, when all the school’s educators examine their efforts and initiatives through the lens of the impact on learning, then the structure and culture of the school begins to change in substantive ways” (Dufour, 2002, p. 15).
APPENDIX 3: Example: Responding To Staff Feedback

From June 30, 2009: Pre-Program Implementation

What Was Missed

• Make goal setting rewarding, not just ‘fun’. How do we make this process consistent across the school or does it need to be?
• Student feedback on their mentor?
• Will Year 12’s with study periods lessons 1 and 2 lose these to Learning Mentor time? Others can’t have all five periods if they fall after recess. Some consideration of equity needed.
• Does the survey test students’ strengths and weaknesses or simply ask their opinion of their strengths and weakness.
• Page numbers on Learning Mentor booklet needed.

Responding to What Was Missed

• The Learning Mentor will be in frequent contact with students to monitor their goals. The achievement of goals will no doubt lead to satisfaction and hence be a rewarding experience. A consistent routine will allow for a shared language to develop and be supportive for Learning Mentors.
• Students will be expected to attend LM sessions - they will still have study periods if it is part of their load. The timetable is built around the inclusion of LM time.
• There is a wide range of surveys each focusing on a different area. Each survey asks a number of questions to improve the validity of results. There will be some specific professional development around each of these.

Ideas/Suggestions – What You Said

• Reduce paper by looking at alternatives e.g. exercise book, USB, iPod Touch. 
• Year 12’s as Mentors?
• Teaching students how to question, seek help, advice, resources etc.
• Year 8 good questions so far. Year 9: What do you like to learn about? How do I support and encourage the independence of others as learners?
• Could we build in more about encouraging and supporting the learning of others?
• Kids will/may have heard some of the language since preschool for Habits of Mind. If this is introduced as a ‘new concept’ this could be a big ‘turn off’ to kids.
• I have real concerns with splitting of Learning Mentor Groups into Years 7-9 and Years 10-12 groupings. If I teach exclusively in the Middle school in 2010, I would really appreciate the opportunity to interact and develop strong relationships with senior students.
• Morning is the best teaching time. Endless data has shown learning occurs more successfully in the first 1 to 2 hours. Surely keep this time for subject teaching and learning. We are not familiar with these data – would it be possible to forward to a member of the team?
• Year 9–12 need workforce skills (government push to recognise these also).
• Question of ability of Year 12/11’s to take on this role we are expecting of them. Year 10 might be the most accessible to train up for the leadership roles.
• Financial planning skills (kids have a lot of disposable income these days.)
• College Leaving Certificate (Community skills, leadership experience, sporting achievements, academic achievements) - is this possible?
• With activities we need to include ones for students on how their behaviour either supports or discourages others in their learning.
• Organisational strategies – time management activities need to be included.
• Stress and anxiety management skills need to be included.
• Is there a transition time for the students to move into the new system? Priority is our students and their relationship with a significant adult.
• Is there a lot of time for one on one with students – seems to be mostly group work?
• Include a glossary in Learning Mentor booklet and number the pages.

Responding to Ideas/Suggestions

• As the program evolves we will look for opportunities to reduce paper, this will be enhanced as the College introduces a 1-1 Laptop system. Initially the number of pages is limited and the group are mindful of environmental concerns.
• Within the program, senior students will have the opportunity to act as peer mentors, this will not be the same role as the Learning Mentor. They will take on leadership roles within the group, support learning, looking out for other students etc.
• Some documentation has been changed to reflect this concern. The focus on The Habits of Mind is about using a shared language not introducing a new program. The only explicit work on these will be one content session to make sure all students have access to the language; portfolios at Year 7 and 8 will reflect the explicit use of the Habits within these programs.
• This split is introduced to support the Learning Mentor as it allows them to have a deep understanding of the developmental needs of their mentee (e.g: planning a ‘going further’ project at Middle School or making subject selections at senior school). The Learning Mentor group will always contain students from Years 7–12 so teachers will always be in contact with this range of student year levels. As this is an evolving program there is potential for flexibility when people consider they are ready.
• It is intended that in their role as peer mentors, older students will develop some (or all) of the ‘8 employability skills’. The Year 10 portfolio question also aims to introduce some careers focus. (Employability skills – 1: communication – written & oral; 2: team-work; 3: problem solving; 4: initiative & enterprise; 5: planning & organizing; 6: self-management; 7: learning skills; 8: technology skills).
• Initially the expectations upon the Year 12 students will be limited, we anticipate their role to grow as the program develops. Some training will be provided to students to support them. This program does present a unique leadership opportunity for our senior students. Yr12s need be involved in the mentoring to look outside themselves - obsession leads to stress. (Comment on ideas and suggestions).
• The LM could model this for students. As there are many specific learning skills and each student will have different needs it is difficult to address each area in detail. Resources will be available for groups to access as needed. *All ideas presented to be taken on board.*

**What Needs Clarification – What You Said**

• Discussions with other mentors to improve practice.
• Staff turnover and how students adapt to this (important to facilitate transition phase).
• Where is the ‘time’ coming from? Increase in teacher workload/senior student workload.
• Clarify/definition Teacher Learning Mentor role.
• Will it go ahead if not properly organised/planned by next year? Staff trained?
• What is the set-up – how many communities will there be? Will this model break up the current house groups?

**Responding to What Needs Clarification**

• The community leaders will be responsible for supporting Learning Mentors in their role. It is always great when teachers spend time talking about and reflecting upon their work. Perhaps this is something to formalise in the future.
• Learning Mentors will work in pairs so when a staff member leaves there is another adult who already knows them well. Opportunities for relationship building are provided throughout the year and this will support new relationships forming. In addition, as information is held electronically, the new Learning Mentor will have access to student data.
• The timetable is being reconstructed to create the Learning Mentor time without taking subject time (achieved by making some minor changes). The Learning Mentor role will be included as part of teacher allotment.
• A role description for Learning Mentors is being written and will be presented to staff.
• It will go ahead in 2010. The program is coming along well and looking good. We know that it is an evolving program and expect it to improve continuously. Staff will have access to information and training both this year and throughout its implementation. A professional development program is being constructed.
• The current Homebase and house system will be dismantled. In its place will be 6 Learning Communities and within each community there will be a number of Learning Mentor Groups.

Please continue the conversation with us via email or in person at any time. We need to know: what we have missed, your ideas/suggestions, what needs further clarification and what looks good.

*Learning Mentor Project Team (JWI, MNU and ARY)*  
*June 30, 2009*
APPENDIX 4: Student Questionnaire

ABOUT IMPROVING MY LEARNING AT THE COLLEGE

Please respond to the following statements by indicating your preference.

SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

(Click on the button that best describes your level of agreement)

MY LEARNING WOULD IMPROVE AT THE COLLEGE

1. If someone helped me to keep up to date with tasks and assignments
   □ SD □ D □ N □ A □ SA

2. If someone regularly checked my progress in all my subjects
   □ SD □ D □ N □ A □ SA

3. If I had the opportunity to sit down with someone to talk about my learning throughout the term
   □ SD □ D □ N □ A □ SA

4. If I had someone who would help me with any learning problems I encounter
   □ SD □ D □ N □ A □ SA

5. If I had help to work out how I learn best
   □ SD □ D □ N □ A □ SA

6. If I had to help to know how to use different learning strategies like concept maps and brainstorming
   □ SD □ D □ N □ A □ SA

7. If someone knew my strengths and weaknesses as a learner and worked with me to improve my performance
   □ SD □ D □ N □ A □ SA
APPENDIX 5: Graphed Student Questionnaire Results

My learning would improve at the College:

1. If someone helped me to keep up to date with tasks and assignments.
Middle School

Year 10

Year 11

Year 12

Senior School

%
My learning would improve at the College:

2. If someone regularly checked my progress in all my subjects.
My learning would improve at the College:

3. If I had the opportunity to sit down with someone to talk about my learning throughout the term.
My learning would improve at the College:

4. If I had someone who would help me with any learning problems I encounter.
My learning would improve at the College:

5. If I had help to work out how I learn best.
My learning would improve at the College:

6. If I had help to know how to use different learning strategies like concept maps and brainstorming.
My learning would improve at the College:

7. If someone knew my strengths and weaknesses as a learner and worked with me to improve my performance.
APPENDIX 6: Learning Mentor Feedback (July 2010)

We are seeking feedback from Learning Mentors about all aspects of the program. You might like to consider commenting on some or all of the following, or other areas that have not been listed –

- Scheduling issues/constraints/ideas
- Length and frequency of Learning Mentor period/s
- Role of the Learning Mentor
- Support for Learning Mentors
- Program content
- Recording student data and updating profiles
- Community activities
- Workload issues
- Family meetings
- Other

It is essential for the continued development of the program that feedback is sought from Learning Mentors on a regular basis. This action will identify what needs improving, maintaining, adding or omitting in order to continuously build the program’s capacity to support our students in their learning.

The data you provide will be aggregated, recurring themes identified and then made available to all staff. Thanks in anticipation of your support.

The Learning Mentor Project Team

About the Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Learning Mentors</th>
<th>85</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Surveys Submitted</td>
<td>53 or 62%</td>
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The findings from the aggregated data were grouped under the following headings:

| 1 | Philosophy/Concept of Program | 11 | Student Profiles |
| 2 | Scheduling of the Learning Mentor Period | 12 | IT Support |
| 3 | Content/Curriculum | 13 | What has Been Lost |
| 4 | Learning Community Leaders Role | 14 | Workload Issues |
| 5 | Learning Mentor Role | 15 | Other |
| 6 | Learning Mentor Period |
| 7 | Learning Community Gatherings/Activities |
| 8 | Learning Community Team Meetings |
| 9 | Parent/Student/Teacher Conferences |
| 10 | Students |
APPENDIX 7: DUHREC Ethics Approval For The Research Project

Memorandum

To: Dr Coral Campbell
   School of Education

From: Deakin University Human Research Ethics Committee (DUHREC)

Date: 19 June, 2013

Subject: 2013-108
   Mentoring Learners for Improved Outcomes in a Victorian Secondary College

Please quote this project number in all future communications

The application for this project was considered at the DUHREC meeting held on 13/05/2013.

Approval has been given for Mrs Anne Ryan, under the supervision of Dr Coral Campbell, School of Education, to undertake this project from 19/06/2013 to 19/06/2017.

The approval given by the Deakin University Human Research Ethics Committee is given only for the project and for the period as stated in the approval. It is your responsibility to contact the Human Research Ethics Unit immediately should any of the following occur:

- Serious or unexpected adverse effects on the participants
- Any proposed changes in the protocol, including extensions of time.
- Any events which might affect the continuing ethical acceptability of the project.
- The project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
- Modifications are requested by other HRECs.

In addition you will be required to report on the progress of your project at least once every year and at the conclusion of the project. Failure to report as required will result in suspension of your approval to proceed with the project.

DUHREC may need to audit this project as part of the requirements for monitoring set out in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).

Human Research Ethics Unit
research-ethics@deakin.edu.au
Telephone: 03 9251 7123
APPENDIX 8: Research Approval Letter: Director of Sandhurst

11 April 2013
Ms Anne Ryan
Catholic College Wodonga
PO Box 591
WODONGA 3690

Dear Anne

Re: Research Proposal: Mentoring Learners for Improved Outcomes in a Victorian Secondary College

I am pleased to advise that, in relation to schools in the Diocese of Sandhurst, your research proposal is approved subject to the following standard conditions.

1. The decision as to whether or not research can proceed in a school rests with the Principal of that school. You will therefore need to obtain approval directly from the Principal, Mr Dave Seiter.

2. You should provide the Principal with an outline of your research proposal and indicate what will be asked of the school. A copy of this letter of approval and a copy of the notification of approval from the relevant Ethics Committee should also be included.

3. No student is to participate in research study unless s/he is willing to do so and informed consent is given by a parent/guardian.

4. Any substantive modifications to the research proposal, or additional research using the data collected, will require a further research proposal approval submission to this Office.

5. Data relating to individuals is to remain confidential.

6. Since participating schools have an interest in the research findings, you should discuss with the Principal ways in which the results of the study could be made available for the benefit of the school community.

7. At the conclusion of the study a copy of the research findings should be forwarded to

Catholic Education Office, Sandhurst
Attn: Assistant Director: Research, Policy and Governance

I wish you well with your research study. If you have any queries concerning this matter, please contact Ms Rosemary Rasmussen (Tel: 5443 2377) of this Office.

Yours sincerely

Philomena Billington
Director of Catholic Education

Signature Redacted by Library
TO: Mr Charles David Seiter (Principal), Catholic College Wodonga

Plain Language Statement

Date:

Full Project Title: Mentoring Learners for Improved Outcomes in a Victorian Secondary College

Principal Researcher: Associate Professor Coral Campbell

Student Researcher: Anne Ryan

Associate Researchers: Professor Christopher Hickey and Emeritus Professor Richard Bates

Dear Mr Seiter

I am enrolled in a PhD program at Deakin University under the supervision of Associate Professor Coral Campbell. In 2010, your school implemented a Learning Mentor Program into the students’ learning and teaching cycle. I am seeking permission to carry out a research project on this Program. In giving permission for the school to be involved in the project, you will be giving permission for students, Learning Mentors (staff members) and parents to be invited to participate.

This project will remain totally independent of my current professional role in the school.

I have received approval for the study to take place from the Diocese of Sandhurst Catholic Education Office.

The purpose of this Plain Language Statement is to explain to you as openly and clearly as possible, all the procedures involved in the project so that you can make a fully informed decision as to whether your school is going to participate. Feel free to ask any questions about the information in the document. You may also wish to discuss the project with your Leadership Team and/or other colleagues.

Once you understand what the project is about and you give permission for the school to participate, you will be asked to sign the Consent Form. By signing the
**Purpose and Background**

The purpose of this research project is to find out:

‘What impact does a school-based mentoring program which is focussed on supporting, developing and promoting the learning life of each student at the College, have on students and their learning?’

**Why the Research is Important**

The unique features of the *Learning Mentor Program* are what make it different to other school-based mentoring practices, and so the outcomes of this research project will build upon and contribute to current knowledge about mentoring in schools.

**Procedures**

Students, Learning Mentors and parents will be invited to participate in this inquiry via an email and by an advertisement in the College Newsletter. The *Plain Language Statements* for parent and student groups will be attached to the emails and the newsletter. The *Plain Language Statement* for Learning Mentors will be emailed directly to staff on a bulk email. You will be given copies of all documentation to keep as a record.

- Participation in this project by students will involve either completing an online questionnaire or responding to questions in a focus group.
- Participation by Learning Mentors will involve either completing an online questionnaire or responding to questions in a semi-structured face-to-face interview.
- Participation by parents will involve completing an anonymous online questionnaire.

**Consent to Participate**

Because the questionnaires are anonymous and online, a paper consent form is not required. Completion and submission of the questionnaire, including the anonymous declaration at the start of the document, will signify consent for all three participatory groups.

Consent forms will however be required from those participating in a focus group session or a semi-structured interview.

Students will be invited to provide their consent to participate in a focus group session after a parent or guardian has provided their consent for them to take part. Students will also be advised to read the *Plain Language Statement* with their parents to ensure that they fully understand any consequences from participation. The *Consent Form* for students to participate in a focus group will also be attached to the newsletter.
The Consent Form for Learning Mentors to participate in a semi-structured interview will be attached to their Plain Language Statement in the bulk email. All signed Consent Forms can be emailed directly to me at ary@deakin.edu.au or returned to the College and posted in the locked mailboxes in the following locations:

- Student Consent Forms posted at Student Reception
- Learning Mentor Consent Forms posted in the staff lunch room

Examples of Questions to be Asked of Student Participants

**Questionnaire: Multiple-Choice**

1. My Learning Mentor knows how I learn best
   - [ ] SD  [ ] D  [ ] U  [ ] A  [ ] SA
2. The Learning Mentor Program provides the right mix of learning and community activities in the Learning Mentor period
   - [ ] SD  [ ] D  [ ] U  [ ] A  [ ] SA

**Questionnaire: Short Answer**

(a) What is the best thing about having a Learning Mentor?
(b) Any other comments you would like to make about the Learning Mentor Program at the College?

**Focus Group**

(a) What impact do you think the Program has had on your learning both directly and indirectly?
(b) What are the best things about the Learning Mentor Program?

Examples of Questions to be Asked of Learning Mentor Participants

**Questionnaire: Multiple-Choice**

1. The Learning Mentor period is an important part of my weekly schedule of classes
   - [ ] SD  [ ] D  [ ] U  [ ] A  [ ] SA
2. I had enough training/professional learning before becoming a Learning Mentor
   - [ ] SD  [ ] D  [ ] U  [ ] A  [ ] SA
Questionnaire: Short Answer

(a) What are the best things about being a Learning Mentor? What are the challenges?
(b) What changes (if any) would you make to the Learning Mentor Program?

Semi-structured Interviews

(a) What are the challenges of being a Learning Mentor?
(b) What benefits have accrued for you personally as a result of participating in the Program?

Examples of Questions to be Asked of Parent Participants

Questionnaire: Multiple-Choice

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Enough opportunities are given for parents, students and mentors to meet to discuss student progress
   [ ] SD [ ] D [ ] U [ ] A [ ] SA
2. The Learning Mentor Program has clear aims which are known to me
   [ ] SD [ ] D [ ] U [ ] A [ ] SA

Questionnaire: Short Answer

(a) In what specific ways does your child/children benefit from the Learning Mentor Program?
(b) Any other comments you would like to make about the Learning Mentor Program at the College?

Participant Withdrawal from the Project

If a participant completes an online questionnaire and then wishes to withdraw, their data cannot be removed, as the questionnaire is anonymous and therefore not linked to participants. This will be made known to potential participants in each of the Plain Language Statements.

If a student wishes to withdraw from a focus group before the session commences, then a parent or guardian can email the Withdrawal of Consent to Participate in a Focus Group Session to me at ary@deakin.edu.au. This email address will be included in the student Plain Language Statement. Focus group participants will not be able to withdraw their contributions once given, as this will impact on the validity of the overall results. Session transcripts cannot be appropriately analysed when the contributions of particular individuals are deleted. Potential participants from the student group will be made aware of this in the Plain Language Statement and Consent to Participate in a Focus Group Form.
If a Learning Mentor wishes to withdraw from an interview session before the session commences, then they can complete and return the Withdrawal of Consent to Participate in an Interview Form to the locked mail box in the staff lunch room or email this form to arv@deakin.edu.au. This email address will be included in the Learning Mentor Plain Language Statement. Interview participants can withdraw from the research process after the interview has taken place, however their contributions will not be able to be removed once the data are aggregated. This will be noted in the Plain Language Statement and Consent to Participate in an Interview Form.

Data Gathering Processes

All data gathering processes will be conducted on site over a 5-month period commencing on Monday 7 October 2013. The online questionnaire for all participatory groups will take approximately 40 minutes to complete. The focus group sessions for students will be held in lunch breaks for approximately 40 minutes on a day convenient to the students. Learning Mentor semi-structured face-to-face interviews will be held after school hours for approximately 30 minutes, with the timing of the interview to be negotiated with each participant. The online questionnaire will be completed before a set date either on or off site and accessed as follows:

1. Students and Learning Mentors – the College intranet
2. Parents via a link on the College website

All semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions will be audio taped and then transcribed. Participants will be given an opportunity to review, edit or erase their contribution on a written transcript of the recording with any changes to be completed and returned to the researcher within 1 week of the interview. Potential participants will be made aware of this time frame on the Plain Language Statement. Focus group participants will be given the opportunity to read the transcript of the session however editing and erasing of content will not be possible because of the reasons outlined previously.

Use of Existing College Data

There are College data sets that I am also requesting your consent to access and use in this inquiry.

- The following anonymous information collected previously by the Learning Mentor Project Team -
  - Student Survey (2009)
  - Staff Feedback (2009)
  - Mid Stage 1 Learning Mentor Feedback (2010)

- NAPLAN Data (2008-2013): State versus School Reports and Relative Growth Summaries only are being requested, in order to see if any changes in the school performance data parallel the implementation of the Program.
These existing data sets are all non-identifiable.

**Privacy, Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information**

All information gathered will be aggregated and findings will be reported only from aggregated forms.

Confidentiality of focus group discussions cannot be guaranteed, however, focus group members will be asked to respect the confidentiality of the other members of the group prior to commencement of discussion sessions.

**Storage of Data**

All Consent Forms, Withdrawal of Consent Forms, Interview and Focus Group transcripts and code data will be stored in a locked cabinet at the College. A copy of this documentation will also be stored in a locked cabinet in my home office. All questionnaire data will be stored on a secured site on the College server and on a backup external hard drive at my residence. As researcher, I will be the only one that has access to the data stored on the College server. The data will also be stored on a secured site at Deakin University.

Access to data will be restricted to my supervisor and to myself. The data will be stored for six years after final publication of the thesis, as prescribed by University regulations, and then destroyed.

**Participation is Voluntary**

Participation in any research project is voluntary and so you are not obliged to give your permission for the College to participate. If you do give permission and later change your mind, you can withdraw your consent for Catholic College Wodonga to participate in the research by completing and mailing or emailing the Withdrawal of Consent Form attached to:

Associate Professor Coral Campbell (Principal Researcher)
Faculty of Arts and Education
Deakin University
Geelong VIC 3217 Email: coral.campbell@deakin.edu.au

Withdrawal of consent can occur at any time BEFORE the completion of data collection. All data will be collected by Friday (date to be determined). If notification to withdraw is not received by this date then I will assume that your consent holds and I will commence the aggregation and analysis of the data.
Benefits and Risks

The outcomes of this study will inform the school community of the impact the Learning Mentor Program has on supporting, developing and promoting the learning life of the students at the College. In the short term, the inquiry will give the opportunity for individuals to record their perceptions and experiences of the Learning Mentor Program. Since there is a paucity of robust studies in the field of mentoring within educational contexts, the research community also stands to benefit.

This inquiry can be described as negligible risk research as there is no foreseeable threat to the safety, emotional or psychological security or well being of participants. The inconvenience of losing time because of making a response through one of the data gathering methods listed, will be the extent of any discomfort.

Results of the Project

The findings of this research project will be presented in thesis format and submitted to Deakin University for examination as a requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. A copy will be given to you as Principal of the College and a notification that a condensed summary of the findings will be made available to participants on request, will be published in the newsletter.

The findings may also be published in peer review journals or presented at conferences. The College will not be named in research publications, conference presentations or any other publicity without prior agreement.

Ethical Guidelines

This project will be carried out according to the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) produced by the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia. This statement has been developed to protect the interests of people who agree to participate in human research studies.

The Deakin University Human Research Ethics Committee (DUHREC) has approved the ethical aspects of the project.

Complaints

If you have any concerns or complaints about any aspect of the project, the way it is being conducted or any questions about your rights as a research participant, then you may contact:

The Manager, Research Integrity, Deakin University, 221 Burwood Highway, Burwood Victoria 3125, Telephone: (03) 9251 7129, research-ethics@deakin.edu.au
Please quote project number [2013-108].
Further Information

If you require any further information with regards to any aspect of this project, please do not hesitate to contact either myself at ary@deakin.edu.au or my supervisor –

Associate Professor Coral Campbell (Principal Researcher)
Faculty of Arts and Education
Deakin University
Geelong VIC 3217
Phone: (03) 522 72666
Email: coral.campbell@deakin.edu.au

Thank you for taking the time to consider the information outlined in this Plain Language Statement.

Kind regards

Signature Redacted by Library

Anne Ryan
DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM

TO: Mr Charles David Seiter (Principal), Catholic College Wodonga

Organisational Consent Form

Date: July 5, 2013

Full Project Title: A whole-school approach to mentoring students: An Australian secondary school case study

Project Number: [2013-108]

I have read and I understand the attached Plain Language Statement.

I give my permission for students, parents and for members of staff who are Learning Mentors to be invited to participate in the research project according to the conditions outlined in the Plain Language Statement.

I give the researcher access to and use of the existing College data sets listed in the Plain Language Statement.

I have been given a copy of the Plain Language Statement and Consent Form to keep as well as the documentation for potential participants from the student, Learning Mentor and parent groups.

The researcher has agreed not to reveal the participants’ identities and personal details if information about this project is published or presented in any public form.

In giving consent for the research project, I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any stage before the completion of data collection.

I agree that

1. Catholic College Wodonga may not be named in research publications or other publicity without prior agreement.
2. I require an opportunity to check the factual accuracy of the research findings that relate to the College.
3. I expect to receive a copy of the research findings or publications.
4. I will not be able to withdraw my consent once data collection is completed.

Name of person giving consent (Principal): Charles David Seiter

Principal’s Signature

Signature Redacted by Library

Date: July 5, 2013
DEAKIN UNIVERSITY
PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM

TO:

Withdrawal of Consent Form

Date:

Full Project Title: *A whole-school approach to mentoring students: An Australian secondary school case study*

Project Number: [2013-108]

I hereby wish to WITHDRAW my consent for Catholic College Wodonga to participate in the above research project. On withdrawing my consent I am complying with the conditions outlined in the Plain Language Statement that the withdrawal has occurred BEFORE the completion of data collection.

I understand that the withdrawal WILL NOT jeopardise my relationship with Deakin University.

Principal's Name:

Principal's Signature: Date:

Please mail or email a signed copy of this Withdrawal of Consent Form to:

Associate Professor Coral Campbell (Principal Researcher)
Faculty of Arts and Education
Deakin University
Geelong VIC 3217
Email: coral.campbell@deakin.edu.au
Dear Students and Learning Mentors

I am enrolled in a PhD program at Deakin University. The focus of the degree is on research and I have been given permission by Mr David Seiter (Principal) and the Sandhurst Catholic Education Office to carry out a research project on the CCW Learning Mentor Program. It is important to note that this project will remain totally independent of my role as a teacher and as a Learning Mentor in the College.

If you are interested in participating in this exciting research project about: The Learning Mentor Program at Catholic College, then please read on!!

I am seeking volunteers from students and from Learning Mentors to share their experiences of the Program.

How about you?

- To find out what is involved, please read your Plain Language Statement. For students this document is attached and for Learning Mentors it has been sent to you via a bulk email.
- Please note that the completion and return of a signed paper consent form will only be required for:
  - Students wishing to participate in a Focus Group
  - Learning Mentors wishing to participate in a face-to-face Interview
- Because the questionnaire is anonymous and online, a paper consent form is not required. Completion and submission of the questionnaire, including the anonymous declaration at the start of the document, will signify consent to participate.

Please feel free to contact me via email aryant@galkin.edu.au should you require any further information.

Your voice is important!

This project has been approved by the Deakin University Human Research Ethics Committee

Project Number [2013-108]

Anne Ryan
APPENDIX 11: Plain Language Statement, Consent Form and Withdrawal of Consent Form: Students

PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT

TO: Students

Date:

Full Project Title: Mentoring Learners for Improved Outcomes in a Victorian Secondary College

Dear Students

I am enrolled in a research program at Deakin University. Mr David Seiter (your Principal) has kindly given me permission to carry out a research project on the Learning Mentor Program. I also have permission to do this from the Sandhurst Catholic Education Office.

It is very important to know that this research project has nothing to do with my job here at the College.

You are invited to participate in this project. What you are about to read is called a Plain Language Statement. What it is meant to do is to explain what you will be asked to do should you decide to participate. It is very important that you read this with your parents because your safety and wellbeing is their first concern. You may also wish to discuss the project with other students, and I encourage you to do so. Feel free to ask me any questions about the information in this statement as well.

What is the project about?

The purpose of the project is to find out what impact the Learning Mentor Program has on supporting you as a learner.

How can you participate?

To be part of the project you will need to choose to do one of two things:

1. Complete an anonymous online questionnaire or
2. Answer questions in a group discussion called a Focus Group

About the Questionnaire

You will be able to access the questionnaire through the Catholic College intranet from Monday (Month and Date), 2013 to Friday (Month and Date) 2013 – a six-
week period. The questionnaire will take you no longer than 40 minutes to complete. Examples of questions you will be asked follow:

**Multiple-Choice**

1. My Learning Mentor knows how I learn best
   - [ ] SD
   - [ ] D
   - [ ] U
   - [ ] A
   - [ ] SA

2. The Learning Mentor Program provides the right mix of learning and community activities in the Learning Mentor period
   - [ ] SD
   - [ ] D
   - [ ] U
   - [ ] A
   - [ ] SA

**Short Answer**

(a) What is the best thing about having a Learning Mentor?

(b) Any other comments you would like to make about the Learning Mentor Program at the College?

**What do I have to do to if I want to complete the questionnaire?**

Because the questionnaire is anonymous and online, a signed paper consent form indicating that you want to participate is not required. After discussions with your parents, you just need to complete and submit the questionnaire including this declaration at the start of the document:

**Declaration**

Having read the Plain Language Statement provided to me by email, I understand that by completing and submitting the following survey I am giving consent to participate in the research.

- [ ] I agree

If you complete the questionnaire and then decide you want to pull out, you will not be able to remove your responses to the questions because the questionnaire is anonymous and therefore your answers are not linked to you. Please keep this in mind when you are choosing whether or not to participate.

**About the Group Discussions or Focus Groups**

The focus group sessions will be held in lunch breaks for about 40 minutes in Meeting Room 1 on a day that best suits the group. Between 6-8 students will be in each group. There are 4 types of groups:

1. Year 7 and 8 students only
2. Year 9 and 10 students only
3. Year 11 and 12 students only
4. Mixed group of Year 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 students

In these groups participants will be asked to share opinions and answer questions about their experiences within the Learning Mentor Program.

*Examples of questions that will be asked are:*

(a) What impact do you think the Program has had on your learning? Directly? Indirectly?

(b) What are the best things about the Learning Mentor Program?

If you choose to participate in a Focus Group you will be asked to keep the nature of the discussion and what other participants have said confidential. You also need to be aware that in sharing your opinions with others in these groups, you will be putting your privacy at risk.

All focus group discussions will be recorded using a digital voice recorder and then a written copy of the discussion will be made from the recording. Students will *not* be identified by name in the written copy.

If you participate in a focus group discussion and then choose to withdraw, you need to know that you will not be able to withdraw your contribution, as this would make the responses collected meaningless because of the nature of discussion groups.

All participants in a Focus Group session will be given the opportunity to read the written copy of their Focus Group discussion at a time that best suits those that wish to do so. I will organise this with participants.

*What do I have to do to participate in a Focus Group?*

To participate in a Focus Group, you and a parent or guardian will need to complete and submit the attached form called *Consent to Participate in a Focus Group Form* by Monday (date to be determined). You will not be able to participate unless you have permission from a parent or guardian. This signed form can be either posted in the locked mailbox at Student Reception or emailed to me at ary@deakin.edu.au.

*How can I pull out of a Focus Group?*

You can pull out of a Focus Group before the Focus Group session has commenced or after it has finished by getting a parent or guardian to complete and sign the *Withdrawal of Consent to Participate in a Focus Group Form* attached, and return it to the locked mailbox at student reception. Alternatively it can be emailed directly to me at ary@deakin.edu.au. If you pull out of the project your forms will be stored as part of the research, unless your parent or guardian specifically requests that they be destroyed.
What will happen with all the responses collected from the students?

All the responses from the questionnaires will be combined and sorted in different ways e.g. by Year Level or by Middle School and Senior School. As the questionnaire is anonymous, your contribution cannot be identified.

The responses from all the Focus Group sessions will be combined as Whole School Responses. An individual student’s contribution will not be able to be identified in this form.

Where will student responses be stored?

All Consent to Participate in a Focus Group, Withdrawal of Consent to Participate in a Focus Group and the written copies of discussions from the Focus Groups will be stored in a locked cabinet at the College. Digital voice recordings will be stored in that form in the same location. A copy of this material will also be stored in a locked cabinet in my home office.

All questionnaire data will be stored on a hard drive of a server at the College and on a backup external hard drive. It will also be stored at Deakin University.

The only people who will have access to the student responses, are myself and my supervisor at the University. The data will be stored for six years, as this is a requirement of the University, and then destroyed.

Do I have to participate in the project?

Participation in any research project is voluntary.

This project is not connected to the expectations of you as a student in any way.

The project has been specifically designed to ensure that the decision not to participate by an individual or the decision to participate, are equally respected.

What are the benefits and the risks?

The outcomes of this study will inform the school community of the impact the Learning Mentor Program has on supporting, developing and promoting the learning life of the students at the College. The broader educational community and the research community will also benefit from this information.

This project is called negligible risk research. The only discomfort to you as a participant should be the discomfort of losing time because of completing the online questionnaire or participating in a Focus Group session.
What happens at the end of the project?

The findings of this research project will be written up in a document called a thesis and sent to Deakin University. A copy of this document will also be given to the College Principal, Mr. David Seiter. A summary of the document will be made available to all participants on request, and this will be advertised in the College Newsletter when it is ready.

What guidelines are being followed?

This research project will be carried out according to the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) produced by the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia. This statement has been developed to protect the interests of people who agree to participate in human research studies.

The Deakin University Human Research Ethics Committee (DUHREC) has approved the ethical aspects of the project.

What if I am not happy with the project?

If you have any complaints about any aspect of the project, the way it is being conducted or any questions about your rights as a participant, then you may contact:

The Manager, Research Integrity, Deakin University, 221 Burwood Highway, Burwood Victoria 3125, Telephone: (03) 9251 7129, research-ethics@deakin.edu.au
Please quote project number [2013-108].

What if I just need further information?

If you require more information, please do not hesitate to come and talk to me or to email me at ary@deakin.edu.au

Finally, thank you for taking the time to consider the information outlined in this Plain Language Statement. As this information is being sent to you electronically, please save a copy of the Plain Language Statement, Consent to Participate in a Focus Group Form and Withdrawal of Consent to Participate in a Focus Group Form to keep as a record.

Kind regards

Signature Redacted by Library

Anne Ryan
CONSENT FORM

TO: Students

Consent to Participate in a Focus Group Form

Date:

Full Project Title: Mentoring Learners for Improved Outcomes in a Victorian Secondary College

Project Number: [2013-108]

I have read and I understand the attached Plain Language Statement.

I freely agree to participate in this project according to the conditions in the Plain Language Statement by participating in the following Focus Group: (please tick the box to indicate which group you consent to):

Year 7 and 8 students only
Year 9 and 10 students only
Year 11 and 12 students only
Year 7-12 students *

* I understand this group will contain students from each of the Year Levels.

In agreeing to participate, I also give consent for discussions in this group to be audio taped and a written copy of the discussion to be made from the recording.

I understand that:

1. I will be asked to keep the nature of the Focus Group discussion and what other participants have said confidential.
2. In sharing my opinions with others I will be putting my privacy at risk.
3. If I choose to withdraw from the project after the focus group discussion has taken place, I will not be able to withdraw my contribution as this would make the responses collected meaningless because of the nature of discussion groups.
4. If I pull out of the project, my forms will be stored as part of the research unless my parent or guardian specifically requests that they be destroyed.
I have copied the *Plain Language Statement, Consent to Participate in a Focus Group Form and Withdrawal of Consent to Participate in a Focus Group Form* from the College Newsletter email for my records.

The researcher has agreed not to reveal my identity and personal details, including where information about this project is published, or presented in any public form.

**Parental/Guardian Consent**

Participant’s Name: (printed) ……………………………………………………………

Name of Person giving Consent: …………………………………………………………

Relationship to Participant: ……………………………………………………………

Signature …………………………… Date ……………………………

**Participant Consent**

Participant’s Name (printed)…………………………………………………………

Signature …………………………… Date ……………………………
WITHDRAWAL OF CONSENT FORM

TO: Students

**Withdrawal of Consent to Participate in a Focus Group Form**

Date:

**Full Project Title:** Mentoring Learners for Improved Outcomes in a Victorian Secondary College

**Project Number:** [2013-108]

I hereby wish to WITHDRAW my consent for ________________ (student’s name) to participate in a Focus Group for the above research project.

I understand that if the Focus Group session has already taken place, I will not be able to withdraw my son/daughter’s contribution, as this would make the responses collected in this group meaningless because of the nature of discussion groups.

I understand my son/daughters consent and withdrawal of consent forms will be stored as part of the research, unless I specifically request that they be destroyed.

I understand that the withdrawal WILL NOT jeopardise my relationship with Deakin University or with the College.

Student’s Name: (printed) .........................................................

Parent/Guardian Name: (printed) .....................................................

Parent/Guardian Signature: ...................... Date: ......................

Please email a signed copy of this Withdrawal of Consent Form to:

ary@deakin.edu.au or alternatively post the form in the locked mailbox at Student Reception.
APPENDIX 12: Plain Language Statement, Consent Form and Withdrawal of Consent Form: Learning Mentors

PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT

TO: Learning Mentors

Date:

Full Project Title: Mentoring Learners for Improved Outcomes in a Victorian Secondary College

Principal Researcher: Associate Professor Coral Campbell

Student Researcher: Anne Ryan

Associate Researchers: Professor Christopher Hickey and Emeritus Professor Richard Bates

Dear Learning Mentors

I am enrolled in a PhD program at Deakin University under the supervision of Associate Professor Coral Campbell. The focus of the degree is on research, and Mr David Seiter (Principal) has given me permission to carry out a research project on the Learning Mentor Program that was implemented at the College in 2010. The Diocese of Sandhurst Catholic Education Office has also given approval for this study to take place.

You are invited to participate in this research project. Your perceptions and experiences of the Program will help to strengthen the results of the investigation.

This Plain Language Statement contains detailed information about the proposed research. Its purpose is to explain to you as openly and clearly as possible, all the procedures involved in the project so that you can make a fully informed decision as to whether you are going to participate.

It is important to note that this project will remain totally independent of my role in the College.

Please read the Plain Language Statement clearly. Feel free to ask any questions about the information in the document. You may also wish to discuss the project with other colleagues.

As this information is being sent to you electronically, please save a copy of all documentation to keep as a record.
Purpose and Background

The purpose of this research project is to find out:

‘What impact does a school-based mentoring program which is focussed on supporting, developing and promoting the learning life of each student at the College, have on students and their learning?’

Why the Research is Important

The unique features of the Learning Mentor Program are what make it different to other school-based mentoring practices, and so the outcomes of this research project will build upon and contribute to current knowledge about mentoring in schools.

Procedures

Participation by Learning Mentors in this project will involve either:

1. Completing an online questionnaire accessed via the College intranet OR
2. Responding to questions in a semi-structured face-to-face interview

If you accept the invitation to participate in an Interview session, you will need to print, sign and return the Consent to Participate in an Interview Form attached to this documentation to the locked mailbox in the staff lunchroom by Monday (date to be determined). Alternatively, you can email the consent to ary@deakin.edu.au by the same date.

Because the questionnaire is anonymous and online, a paper consent form is not required. Completion and submission of the questionnaire, including the anonymous declaration at the start of the document, will signify consent to participate.

All data for this project will be collected over a 5-month period commencing on (date to be determined).

Online Questionnaire

The online questionnaire will be accessed through the College intranet and available from Monday (Month and Date), 2013 to Friday (Month and Date) - a six-week period. The questionnaire will take approximately 40 minutes to complete. Examples of questions that will be asked are listed below:

Multiple-Choice

1. The Learning Mentor period is an important part of my weekly schedule of classes
   □ SD □ D □ U □ A □ SA

2. I had enough training/professional learning before becoming a Learning Mentor
   □ SD □ D □ U □ A □ SA
Short Answer

(a) What are the best things about being a Learning Mentor? What are the challenges?
(b) What changes (if any) would you make to the Learning Mentor Program?

As participation in the project via online questionnaire is anonymous, the identity of those who have or have not participated in the study will remain unknown.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews will be held after school for approximately 30 minutes at the College on a day convenient to and negotiated with the participant. I will email a formal notification of the session date, time and location to the participant. All interviews will be audio taped and then transcribed, so that participants can review, edit or remove their contribution on a written transcript of the recording should they wish to do so. Any changes will need to be completed and returned to me within 1 week of the interview session. After this time, I will assume the participant is happy with the information provided.

Examples of questions that will be asked in the Interview are listed below:

(a) What are the challenges of being a Learning Mentor?
(b) What benefits have accrued for you personally as a result of participating in the Program?

Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information

To protect the privacy and confidentiality of Learning Mentor participants:

(a) All information gathered via the online questionnaire is non-identifiable as the questionnaire is anonymous. This information will be combined and sorted by the following categories:

- Teacher/non-teacher
- Occupies leadership role/no leadership role
- (1-10) years of experience working in educational settings/more than 10 years of experience working in educational settings

(b) All transcripts from face-to-face interview sessions will be coded. The data from the transcripts will then be combined and analysed for patterns or trends. Pseudonyms only will be used in the transcriptions.

Withdrawal from the Project

If you decide to take part in the project, and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw. If you have completed the online questionnaire and then wish to withdraw, your data cannot be removed, as the questionnaire is anonymous and therefore data are not linked to a participant.
If you wish to withdraw from an interview session before the session commences, then you can advise me of the withdrawal by completing and returning the Withdrawal of Consent to Participate in an Interview Form to the locked mail box in the staff lunch room or by emailing this form to ary@deakin.edu.au. You can withdraw from the research process after the interview has taken place, however your contributions will not be able to be removed once the data are aggregated. A time frame for aggregation of interview data will be given to participants at the interview.

Storage of Data

All Consent to Participate in an Interview forms, interview transcripts, Withdrawal of Consent to Participate in an Interview forms and code data will be stored in a locked cabinet at the College. A copy of this documentation will also be stored in a locked cabinet in my home office. All questionnaire data will be stored on a secured site on the College server and on a backup external hard drive at my residence. As researcher, I will be the only one that has access to the data stored on the College server. The data will also be stored on a secured site at Deakin University.

Consent forms and withdrawal of consent forms of participants withdrawing from interviews will be stored in a separate folder to the participatory consent forms. Interview transcripts of those that withdraw after the interview has taken place will also be maintained, but without analysis. They will be stored for the required minimum period as a matter of research integrity, unless the interview participant specifically insists that it be destroyed. The latter is a participant’s right under the privacy legislation.

Access to data will be restricted to my supervisor and to myself. The data will be stored for six years after final publication of the thesis, as prescribed by University regulations, and then destroyed.

Participation is Voluntary

Participation in any research project is voluntary.

If you do not wish to take part in the project, you are not obliged to do. This project is not connected to the expectations of you as an employee in any way.

The project has been specifically designed to ensure that the decision not to participate by an individual or the decision to participate, are equally respected.

Benefits and Risks

The outcomes of this study will inform the school community of the impact the Learning Mentor Program has on supporting, developing and promoting the learning life of the students at the College. The broader educational community and the research community will also benefit from this information.
This project is called *negligible risk research*, as there is no threat to the safety, emotional or psychological security or well being of participants. The inconvenience of losing time because of making a response through one of the data gathering methods listed, will be the extent of any discomfort.

**Results of the Project**

The findings of this research project will be presented in a thesis format and submitted to Deakin University for examination. After this, a copy will be given to the College Principal and notification that a condensed summary of the findings will be made available to participants on request, will be published in the newsletter.

The findings may also be published in peer review journals or presented at conferences, however the College will not be named without prior consent from the Principal

**Ethical Guidelines**

This project will be carried out according to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)* produced by the *National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia*. This statement has been developed to protect the interests of people who agree to participate in human research studies.

The *Deakin University Human Research Ethics Committee* (DUHREC) has approved the ethical aspects of the project.

**Complaints**

If you have any complaints about any aspect of the project, the way it is being conducted or any questions about your rights as a research participant, then you may contact:

The Manager, Research Integrity, Deakin University, 221 Burwood Highway, Burwood Victoria 3125, Telephone: (03) 9251 7129, [research-ethics@deakin.edu.au](mailto:research-ethics@deakin.edu.au). Please quote project number [2013-108].

**Further Information**

If you require any further information with regards to any aspect of this project, please do not hesitate to contact either myself at [ary@deakin.edu.au](mailto:ary@deakin.edu.au) or my supervisor –

Associate Professor Coral Campbell (Principal Researcher)
Faculty of Arts and Education
Deakin University
Geelong VIC 3217
Phone: (03) 522 72666
Email: coral.campbell@deakin.edu.au

Thank you for taking the time to consider the information outlined in this Plain Language Statement.

Kind regards

Signature Redacted by Library

Anne Ryan
CONSENT FORM

TO: Learning Mentors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consent to Participate in an Interview Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Date:**

**Full Project Title:** Mentoring Learners for Improved Outcomes in a Victorian Secondary College

**Project Number:** [2013-108]

I have read and I understand the attached Plain Language Statement.

I freely agree to participate in this project by participating in a semi-structured face-to-face interview according to the conditions in the Plain Language Statement.

I give consent for the interview to be audio taped and understand I will be given a copy of the transcript to review, edit or to remove my contribution before the information is aggregated should I choose to do so. I understand that any change will need to be completed within 1 week of the interview.

I have copied the Plain Language Statement and Consent Form from the bulk staff email for my records.

The researcher has agreed not to reveal my identity and personal details, including where information about this project is published, or presented in any public form.

Learning Mentor’s Name: (printed)…………………………………………………………

Learning Mentor’s Signature: ……………………………………………………………

Date ………………………………………

Please post a signed copy of this Consent to Participate in an Interview Form in the locked mail box in the staff lunch room or email a signed copy to: ary@deakin.edu.au
WITHDRAWAL OF CONSENT FORM

TO: Learning Mentors

Withdrawal of Consent to Participate in an Interview Form

Date:

Full Project Title: Mentoring Learners for Improved Outcomes in a Victorian Secondary College

Project Number: [2013-108]

I hereby wish to WITHDRAW my consent to participate in the above research project. On withdrawing my consent I understand that if I am withdrawing after the interview has taken place, my contributions will not be able to be removed if the data has been aggregated.

I understand that my Consent to Participate in an Interview Form and interview transcript will be maintained for the required minimum period, but without analysis unless I insist that these data be destroyed.

I understand that the withdrawal WILL NOT jeopardise my relationship with Deakin University or with the College.

Learning Mentor’s Name: (printed) ………………………………………

Learning Mentor’s Signature: …………….. Date: ………………………

Please post a signed copy of this Withdrawal of Consent to Participate in an Interview Form in the locked mail box in the staff lunch room or email a signed copy to: ary@deakin.edu.au
APPENDIX 13: Student Online Questionnaire

Dear Participant

In this questionnaire you are asked to respond to statements by ticking the option that best describes your level of agreement. If you are undecided, then please select U.

Response Options

SA = Strongly Agree
A = Agree
U = Undecided
D = Disagree
SD = Strongly Disagree

You are also asked to respond to 5 open-ended questions – Q.22, 23, 38, 39 and 40.

Question 1: Consent to Participate

Declaration

Having read the Plain Language Statement provided to me by email, I understand that by completing and submitting the following questionnaire I am giving consent to participate in the research.

☐ I agree

Before commencing the survey, please tick the appropriate gender and Year Level category that applies to you:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 2: Gender</th>
<th>Question 3: Year Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Male</td>
<td>☐ Year 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Year 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Year 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Year 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Year 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part A: The Learning Mentor Program (Processes)

The Learning Mentor Program:

4. Has clear aims which are known to me.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

5. Has met my expectations.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

6. Has a good structure: 6 Learning Communities with each Learning Community divided into Learning Mentor Groups.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

7. Provides the right mix of learning and community activities in the Learning Mentor period.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

8. Provides interesting activities to complete in the Learning Mentor Period.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

9. Has allocated the right amount of time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

10. Needs to allocate more time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA
11. Needs to allocate less time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

**Part B: My Learning Mentor** (Effectiveness of Relationship)

*My Learning Mentor:*

12. Knows me well.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA


☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

14. Talks to me about what I need to work on to improve my learning.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

15. Helps me to improve my learning.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

16. Is available for advice and support when I need it.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

17. Has developed a good relationship with me.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA
18. Is interested in how I am going at school.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA


☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

20. Regularly updates my parents/guardians on my progress.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

21. Has helped me to gain learning confidence.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

22. What have you learnt about yourself as a result of your relationship with your Learning Mentor?

23. What is the best thing about having a Learning Mentor?
Part C: The Learning Mentor Program (Impact)

24. The Learning Mentor period is an important part of my weekly schedule of classes.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

25. My Learning Mentor Group provides a caring, supportive and encouraging environment for me.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

26. I sometimes get help with my work from the other members of my Learning Mentor Group.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

The activities I have completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped me to:

27. Understand how I learn best

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

28. Become a more independent learner.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

29. Improve my organisational skills.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

30. Improve grades and test scores.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA
31. Develop better communication skills.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

32. Develop better teamwork skills.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

*Because of the Learning Mentor Program:*

33. I now set learning goals for myself.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

34. I know how to use different learning strategies.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

35. I know how to use different problem solving strategies.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

36. The Learning Mentor Program has helped motivate me to improve my learning.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

37. The Learning Mentor Program has helped to increase my confidence as a learner.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA
38. What are the best things about the Learning Mentor Program?


39. What changes (if any) would you make to the Learning Mentor Program?


40. Any other comments you would like to make about the Learning Mentor Program at the College?


Before you submit this questionnaire, please make sure you have answered all of the questions including the questions where you have been asked to type in a response.

Thankyou for participating in this research project. Your opinions are very much appreciated.
APPENDIX 14: LEARNING MENTOR ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Participant

In this questionnaire you are asked to respond to statements by ticking the option that best describes your level of agreement. If you are undecided, then please select U.

*Response Options*

SA = Strongly Agree  
A = Agree  
U = Undecided  
D = Disagree  
SD = Strongly Disagree

You are also asked to respond to 5 open-ended questions – Q.18, 39, 40, 41 and 42.

---

**Question 1: Consent to Participate**

*Declaration*

Having read the Plain Language Statement provided to me by email, I understand that by completing and submitting the following questionnaire I am giving consent to participate in the research.

☐ I agree

*Before commencing the survey, please place a tick in each of the categories that apply to you.*

**Question 2: Gender**

☐ Male  
☐ Female

**Question 4: Employment at CCW**

☐ Teaching Staff  
☐ Non-teaching Staff

**Question 3: Teaching Experience**

☐ 0-10 years teaching experience  
☐ More than 10 years teaching experience

**Question 5: Holder of Leadership Role**

☐ Yes  
☐ No
Part A: The Learning Mentor Program (Processes)

The Learning Mentor Program:

6. Has clear aims which are known to me.
   ☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

7. Has met my expectations.
   ☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

8. Has a good structure: 6 Learning Communities with each Learning Community divided into Learning Mentor Groups.
   ☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

9. Provides the right mix of learning and community activities in the Learning Mentor period.
   ☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

10. Provides interesting activities to complete in the Learning Mentor Period.
    ☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

11. Has allocated the right amount of time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.
    ☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

12. Needs to allocate more time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.
    ☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

13. Needs to allocate less time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.
    ☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

Learning Mentor

14. I had enough training/professional learning before becoming a Learning Mentor.
    ☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

15. There is enough ongoing support to help me meet the challenges of mentoring.
    ☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA
16. I understand what my role is as a Learning Mentor.
☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

17. I often reflect on my effectiveness as a Learning Mentor.
☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

18. (a) What are the best things about being a Learning Mentor? (b) What are the challenges?

Part B: Working with My Learning Mentor Group (Effectiveness of Relationship)

19. As a result of the Program, the students in my Learning Mentor Group feel connected to a significant adult.
☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

20. I have developed a good relationship with my Learning Mentor Group.
☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

21. I know how the students in my Learning Mentor Group learn best.
☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

22. I recognize the achievements of the students in my Learning Mentor Group.
☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

23. I regularly update the parents/guardians of the progress of the students in my Learning Mentor Group.
☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA
24. The activities in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students consolidate relationships within the Learning Mentor group.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

**Part C: The Learning Mentor Program** (Impact)

25. The Learning Mentor period is an important part of my weekly schedule of classes.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

26. My Learning Mentor Group provides a caring, supportive and encouraging environment for the students.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

27. I encourage members of my Learning Mentor Group to help each other.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

*The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students to:*

28. Understand how they learn best.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

29. Become more independent learners.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

30. Improve organisational skills.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

31. Improve grades and test scores.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

32. Develop better communication skills.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

33. Develop better teamwork skills.

☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA
34. Set learning goals.
☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

35. Use different learning strategies.
☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

36. Use different problem-solving strategies.
☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

37. Develop their confidence as a learner.
☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

38. The Learning Mentor Program has helped motivate students to improve their own learning.
☐ SD ☐ D ☐ U ☐ A ☐ SA

39. (a) What are the best things about the Learning Mentor Program? (b) What are its current challenges?

40. What benefits have accrued for you as a result of participating in the Program?

41. What changes (if any) would you make to the Learning Mentor Program?
42. Any other comments you would like to make about the Learning Mentor Program at the College?

Before you submit this questionnaire, please make sure you have answered all of the questions including the questions where you have been asked to type a response.

Thankyou for participating in this research project. Your opinions are very much appreciated.
### APPENDIX 15: Student Closed Response Item Year Level Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Response Categories</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 12</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years 8 and 9 (Grouped Data)</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years 10, 11 and 12 (Senior School)</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 (Grouped Data)</td>
<td>509</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### SUMMARY OF PARTICIPATION DATA

**Part A: THE LEARNING MENTOR PROGRAM (PROCESSES)**

#### Year 7 Data Responses to: The Learning Mentor Program ……

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has clear aims which are known to me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has met my expectations.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a good structure: 6 Learning Communities with each Learning Community divided into Learning Mentor Groups.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides the right mix of learning and community activities in the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides interesting and relevant activities to complete in the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has allocated the right amount of time weekly to the learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs to allocate more time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs to allocate less time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
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</table>

#### Year 8 Data Responses to: The Learning Mentor Program ……

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has clear aims which are known to me.</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has met my expectations.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a good structure: 6 Learning Communities with each Learning Community divided into Learning Mentor Groups.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides the right mix of learning and community activities in the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides interesting and relevant activities to complete in the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has allocated the right amount of time weekly to the learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs to allocate more time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs to allocate less time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
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</table>
## Year 9 Data Responses to: The Learning Mentor Program ……

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has clear aims which are known to me.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has met my expectations.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a good structure: 6 Learning Communities with each Learning Community divided into Learning Mentor Groups.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides the right mix of learning and community activities in the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides interesting and relevant activities to complete in the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has allocated the right amount of time weekly to the learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs to allocate more time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs to allocate less time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
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</table>

## Year 10 Data Responses to: The Learning Mentor Program ……

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has clear aims which are known to me.</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has met my expectations.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a good structure: 6 Learning Communities with each Learning Community divided into Learning Mentor Groups.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides the right mix of learning and community activities in the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides interesting and relevant activities to complete in the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has allocated the right amount of time weekly to the learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs to allocate more time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs to allocate less time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 11 Data Responses to:</strong> The Learning Mentor Program ......</td>
<td><strong>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Undecided (%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has clear aims which are known to me.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has met my expectations.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a good structure: 6 Learning Communities with each Learning Community divided into Learning Mentor Groups.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides the right mix of learning and community activities in the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides interesting and relevant activities to complete in the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has allocated the right amount of time weekly to the learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs to allocate more time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs to allocate less time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Year 12 Data Responses to:</strong> The Learning Mentor Program ......</th>
<th><strong>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Undecided (%)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has clear aims which are known to me.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has met my expectations.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a good structure: 6 Learning Communities with each Learning Community divided into Learning Mentor Groups.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides the right mix of learning and community activities in the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides interesting and relevant activities to complete in the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has allocated the right amount of time weekly to the learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs to allocate more time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs to allocate less time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Part B: MY LEARNING MENTOR (EFFECTIVENESS OF RELATIONSHIPS)

### Year 7 Data Responses to: My Learning Mentor……

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knows me well.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knows how I learn best.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talks to me about what I need to work on to improve my learning.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps me to improve my learning.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is available for advice and support when I need it.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has developed a good relationship with me.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is interested in how I am going at school.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizes my achievements.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly updates my parents/guardians on my progress.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has helped me to gain confidence as a learner.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>74</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Year 8 Data Responses to: My Learning Mentor……

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knows me well.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knows how I learn best.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talks to me about what I need to work on to improve my learning.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps me to improve my learning.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is available for advice and support when I need it.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has developed a good relationship with me.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is interested in how I am going at school.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizes my achievements.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly updates my parents/guardians on my progress.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has helped me to gain confidence as a learner.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 9 Data Responses to: My Learning Mentor……</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</td>
<td>Undecided (%)</td>
<td>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knows me well.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knows how I learn best.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talks to me about what I need to work on to improve my learning.</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps me to improve my learning.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is available for advice and support when I need it.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has developed a good relationship with me.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is interested in how I am going at school.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizes my achievements.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly updates my parents/guardians on my progress.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has helped me to gain confidence as a learner.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>52</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 10 Data Responses to: My Learning Mentor……</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knows me well.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knows how I learn best.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talks to me about what I need to work on to improve my learning.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps me to improve my learning.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is available for advice and support when I need it.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has developed a good relationship with me.</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is interested in how I am going at school.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizes my achievements.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly updates my parents/guardians on my progress.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has helped me to gain confidence as a learner.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>42</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Year 11 Data Responses to: My Learning Mentor……

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knows me well.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knows how I learn best.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talks to me about what I need to work on to improve my learning.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps me to improve my learning.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is available for advice and support when I need it.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has developed a good relationship with me.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is interested in how I am going at school.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizes my achievements.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly updates my parents/guardians on my progress.</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has helped me to gain confidence as a learner.</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Year 12 Data Responses to: My Learning Mentor……

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knows me well.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knows how I learn best.</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talks to me about what I need to work on to improve my learning.</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps me to improve my learning.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is available for advice and support when I need it.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has developed a good relationship with me.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is interested in how I am going at school.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizes my achievements.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly updates my parents/guardians on my progress.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has helped me to gain confidence as a learner.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Part C: THE LEARNING MENTOR PROGRAM (IMPACT)

### Year 7 Data: Program Impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor period is an important part of my weekly schedule of classes.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Learning Mentor Group provides a caring, supportive and encouraging environment for me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I sometimes get help with my work from other members of my learning Mentor Group.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities I have completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped me to...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand how I learn best.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become a more independent learner.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve my organisational skills.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve grades and test scores.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop better communication skills.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop better teamwork skills.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because of the Learning Mentor Program…...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I now set learning goals for myself.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to use different learning strategies.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to use different problem solving strategies.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor Program has helped motivate me to improve my learning.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor Program has helped increase my confidence as a learner.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Year 8 Data: Program Impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor period is an important part of my weekly schedule of classes.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Learning Mentor Group provides a caring, supportive and encouraging environment for me.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I sometimes get help with my work from other members of my learning Mentor Group.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities I have completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped me to...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand how I learn best.</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become a more independent learner.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Improve my organisational skills. 25 28 47
Improve grades and test scores. 23 34 43
Develop better communication skills. 23 28 49
Develop better teamwork skills. 25 31 44

**Because of the Learning Mentor Program…**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I now set learning goals for myself.</th>
<th>39</th>
<th>27</th>
<th>34</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I know how to use different learning strategies.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to use different problem solving strategies.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor Program has helped motivate me to improve my learning.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor Program has helped increase my confidence as a learner.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Year 9 Data: Program Impact**

| The Learning Mentor period is an important part of my weekly schedule of classes. | 13 | 20 | 67 |
| My Learning Mentor Group provides a caring, supportive and encouraging environment for me. | 11 | 20 | 69 |
| I sometimes get help with my work from other members of my learning Mentor Group. | 18 | 8 | 74 |

The activities I have completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped me to…

| Understand how I learn best. | 33 | 25 | 42 |
| Become a more independent learner. | 20 | 22 | 58 |
| Improve my organisational skills. | 19 | 28 | 53 |
| Improve grades and test scores. | 22 | 31 | 47 |
| Develop better communication skills. | 21 | 25 | 54 |
| Develop better teamwork skills. | 22 | 26 | 52 |

**Because of the Learning Mentor Program…**

<p>| I now set learning goals for myself. | 36 | 29 | 35 |
| I know how to use different learning strategies. | 25 | 27 | 48 |
| I know how to use different problem solving strategies. | 35 | 29 | 36 |
| The Learning Mentor Program has helped motivate me to improve my learning. | 23 | 26 | 51 |
| The Learning Mentor Program has helped increase my confidence as a learner. | 25 | 25 | 50 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 10 Data: Program Impact</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor period is an important part of my weekly schedule of classes.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Learning Mentor Group provides a caring, supportive and encouraging environment for me.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I sometimes get help with my work from other members of my learning Mentor Group.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The activities I have completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped me to....

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understand how I learn best.</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become a more independent learner.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve my organisational skills.</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve grades and test scores.</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop better communication skills.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop better teamwork skills.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because of the Learning Mentor Program....

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I now set learning goals for myself.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to use different learning strategies.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to use different problem solving strategies.</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor Program has helped motivate me to improve my learning.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor Program has helped increase my confidence as a learner.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>45</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 11 Data: Program Impact</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor period is an important part of my weekly schedule of classes.</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Learning Mentor Group provides a caring, supportive and encouraging environment for me.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I sometimes get help with my work from other members of my learning Mentor Group.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The activities I have completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped me to....

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understand how I learn best.</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become a more independent learner.</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve my organisational skills.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statements</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</td>
<td>Undecided (%)</td>
<td>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve grades and test scores.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop better communication skills.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop better teamwork skills.</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Because of the Learning Mentor Program….</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I now set learning goals for myself.</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to use different learning strategies.</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to use different problem solving strategies.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor Program has helped motivate me to improve my learning.</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor Program has helped increase my confidence as a learner.</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 12 Data: Program Impact</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Learning Mentor period is an important part of my weekly schedule of classes.</strong></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>My Learning Mentor Group provides a caring, supportive and encouraging environment for me.</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I sometimes get help with my work from other members of my learning Mentor Group.</strong></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The activities I have completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped me to…</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand how I learn best.</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become a more independent learner.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve my organisational skills.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve grades and test scores.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop better communication skills.</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop better teamwork skills.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Because of the Learning Mentor Program….</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I now set learning goals for myself.</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to use different learning strategies.</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to use different problem solving strategies.</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor Program has helped motivate me to improve my learning.</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor Program has helped increase my confidence as a learner.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX 16: Student Closed-Response Item Year Level Gender Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Response Categories</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 8</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 9</td>
<td>94</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>130</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 11</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 12</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>657</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years 8 and 9 (Grouped Data)</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years 10, 11 and 12 (Senior School)</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 (Grouped Data)</td>
<td>509</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### SUMMARY OF PARTICIPATION DATA

Part A: THE LEARNING MENTOR PROGRAM (PROCESSES)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 7 Data Responses to: The Learning Mentor Program ……</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has clear aims which are known to me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has met my expectations.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a good structure: 6 Learning Communities with each Learning Community divided into Learning Mentor Groups.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides the right mix of learning and community activities in the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides interesting and relevant activities to complete in the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has allocated the right amount of time weekly to the learning Mentor period.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs to allocate more time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs to allocate less time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 8 Data Responses to: The Learning Mentor Program ……</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has clear aims which are known to me.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has met my expectations.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a good structure: 6 Learning Communities with each Learning Community divided into Learning Mentor Groups.</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides the right mix of learning and community activities in the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides interesting and relevant activities to complete in the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has allocated the right amount of time weekly to the learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs to allocate more time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs to allocate less time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</td>
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<td>58</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 9 Data Responses to: The Learning Mentor Program ……</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Has clear aims which are known to me.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Has met my expectations.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Has a good structure: 6 Learning Communities with each Learning Community divided into Learning Mentor Groups.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provides the right mix of learning and community activities in the Learning Mentor period.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provides interesting and relevant activities to complete in the Learning Mentor period.</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Has allocated the right amount of time weekly to the learning Mentor period.</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Needs to allocate more time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>54</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Needs to allocate less time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</strong></td>
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<td>62</td>
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<td>27</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 10 Data Responses to: The Learning Mentor Program ……</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Has clear aims which are known to me.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Has met my expectations.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Has a good structure: 6 Learning Communities with each Learning Community divided into Learning Mentor Groups.</strong></td>
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<td>16</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>33</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Provides interesting and relevant activities to complete in the Learning Mentor period.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Has allocated the right amount of time weekly to the learning Mentor period.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Needs to allocate more time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Needs to allocate less time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Year 11 Data Responses to: The Learning Mentor Program ……

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has clear aims which are known to me.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has met my expectations.</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a good structure: 6 Learning Communities with each Learning Community divided into Learning Mentor Groups.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>60</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has allocated the right amount of time weekly to the learning Mentor period.</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Needs to allocate more time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</td>
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<td>64</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Needs to allocate less time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Year 12 Data Responses to: The Learning Mentor Program ……

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has clear aims which are known to me.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has met my expectations.</td>
<td>24</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a good structure: 6 Learning Communities with each Learning Community divided into Learning Mentor Groups.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides the right mix of learning and community activities in the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides interesting and relevant activities to complete in the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has allocated the right amount of time weekly to the learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs to allocate more time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs to allocate less time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>23</td>
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## Part B: MY LEARNING MENTOR (EFFECTIVENESS OF RELATIONSHIPS)

### Year 7 Data Responses to: My Learning Mentor …

<table>
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<tr>
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</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>84</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knows how I learn best.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>51</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talks to me about what I need to work on to improve my learning.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>Helps me to improve my learning.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>68</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is interested in how I am going at school.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizes my achievements.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>76</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regularly updates my parents/guardians on my progress.</td>
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<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has helped me to gain confidence as a learner.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>70</td>
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### Year 8 Data Responses to: My Learning Mentor …

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<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knows me well.</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knows how I learn best.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>29</td>
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<td>48</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talks to me about what I need to work on to improve my learning.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps me to improve my learning.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is available for advice and support when I need it.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has developed a good relationship with me.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is interested in how I am going at school.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizes my achievements.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>65</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly updates my parents/guardians on my progress.</td>
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<td>36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has helped me to gain confidence as a learner.</td>
<td>12</td>
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### Year 9 Data Responses to: My Learning Mentor …

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<tr>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>64</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knows how I learn best.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talks to me about what I need to work on to improve my learning.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps me to improve my learning.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is available for advice and support when I need it.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has developed a good relationship with me.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is interested in how I am going at school.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>73</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recognizes my achievements.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>71</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Has helped me to gain confidence as a learner.</td>
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<td>42</td>
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### Year 10 Data Responses to: My Learning Mentor …

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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Knows me well.</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>56</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knows how I learn best.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>37</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talks to me about what I need to work on to improve my learning.</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps me to improve my learning.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is available for advice and support when I need it.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has developed a good relationship with me.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is interested in how I am going at school.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizes my achievements.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly updates my parents/guardians on my progress.</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has helped me to gain confidence as a learner.</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>39</td>
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### Year 11 Data Responses to: My Learning Mentor …

<table>
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<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</th>
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<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knows me well.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knows how I learn best.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talks to me about what I need to work on to improve my learning.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps me to improve my learning.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is available for advice and support when I need it.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has developed a good relationship with me.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is interested in how I am going at school.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizes my achievements.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly updates my parents/guardians on my progress.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has helped me to gain confidence as a learner.</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>32</td>
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### Year 12 Data Responses to: My Learning Mentor …

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>Male</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knows me well.</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knows how I learn best.</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talks to me about what I need to work on to improve my learning.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps me to improve my learning.</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is available for advice and support when I need it.</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has developed a good relationship with me.</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is interested in how I am going at school.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizes my achievements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regularly updates my parents/guardians on my progress.</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has helped me to gain confidence as a learner.</td>
<td>33</td>
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Part C: THE LEARNING MENTOR PROGRAM (IMPACT)

<table>
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<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor period is an important part of my weekly schedule of classes.</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Learning Mentor Group provides a caring, supportive and encouraging environment.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I sometimes get help with my work from other members of my learning Mentor Group.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities I have completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped me to….</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand how I learn best.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become a more independent learner.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve my organisational skills.</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve grades and test scores.</td>
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<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop better communication skills.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop better teamwork skills.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because of the Learning Mentor Program….</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I now set learning goals for myself.</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to use different learning strategies.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to use different problem solving strategies.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor Program has helped motivate me to improve my learning.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor Program has helped increase my confidence as a learner.</td>
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### Year 8 Data: Program Impact

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor period is an important part of my weekly schedule of classes.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Learning Mentor Group provides a caring, supportive and encouraging environment.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I sometimes get help with my work from other members of my learning Mentor Group.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities I have completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped me to...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand how I learn best.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become a more independent learner.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve my organisational skills.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve grades and test scores.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop better communication skills.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop better teamwork skills.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because of the Learning Mentor Program....</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I now set learning goals for myself.</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to use different learning strategies.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>I know how to use different problem solving strategies.</td>
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<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor Program has helped motivate me to improve my learning.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor Program has helped increase my confidence as a learner.</td>
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### Year 9 Data: Program Impact

<table>
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<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Male</strong></td>
<td><strong>Female</strong></td>
<td><strong>Male</strong></td>
<td><strong>Female</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor period is an important part of my weekly schedule of classes.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Learning Mentor Group provides a caring, supportive and encouraging environment.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I sometimes get help with my work from other members of my learning Mentor Group.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The activities I have completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped me to....*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Male</strong></td>
<td><strong>Female</strong></td>
<td><strong>Male</strong></td>
<td><strong>Female</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand how I learn best.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become a more independent learner.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve my organisational skills.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve grades and test scores.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop better communication skills.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop better teamwork skills.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Because of the Learning Mentor Program....*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Male</strong></td>
<td><strong>Female</strong></td>
<td><strong>Male</strong></td>
<td><strong>Female</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I now set learning goals for myself.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to use different learning strategies.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to use different problem solving strategies.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor Program has helped motivate me to improve my learning.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor Program has helped increase my confidence as a learner.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Year 10 Data: Program Impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Learning Mentor period is an important part of my weekly schedule of classes.</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Learning Mentor Group provides a caring, supportive and encouraging environment.</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I sometimes get help with my work from other members of my learning Mentor Group.</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The activities I have completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped me to....**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understand how I learn best.</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Become a more independent learner.</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improve my organisational skills.</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improve grades and test scores.</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Develop better communication skills.</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Develop better teamwork skills.</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Because of the Learning Mentor Program....**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I now set learning goals for myself.</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I know how to use different learning strategies.</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I know how to use different problem solving strategies.</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Learning Mentor Program has helped motivate me to improve my learning.</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Learning Mentor Program has helped increase my confidence as a learner.</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Year 11 Data: Program Impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor period is an important part of my weekly schedule of classes.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Learning Mentor Group provides a caring, supportive and encouraging environment.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I sometimes get help with my work from other members of my learning Mentor Group.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The activities I have completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped me to....**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand how I learn best.</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become a more independent learner.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve my organisational skills.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve grades and test scores.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop better communication skills.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop better teamwork skills.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Because of the Learning Mentor Program....**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I now set learning goals for myself.</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to use different learning strategies.</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to use different problem solving strategies.</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor Program has helped motivate me to improve my learning.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor Program has helped increase my confidence as a learner.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Year 12 Data: Program Impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Learning Mentor period is an important part of my weekly schedule of classes.</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Learning Mentor Group provides a caring, supportive and encouraging environment.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I sometimes get help with my work from other members of my learning Mentor Group.</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The activities I have completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped me to...

| Understand how I learn best. | 50 | 48 | 29 | 22 | 21 | 30 |
| Become a more independent learner. | 29 | 30 | 29 | 22 | 42 | 48 |
| Improve my organisational skills. | 29 | 57 | 29 | 13 | 42 | 30 |
| Improve grades and test scores. | 29 | 43 | 29 | 35 | 42 | 22 |
| Develop better communication skills. | 20 | 35 | 0 | 35 | 71 | 30 |
| Develop better teamwork skills. | 29 | 30 | 14 | 26 | 57 | 44 |

### Because of the Learning Mentor Program....

| I now set learning goals for myself. | 38 | 52 | 15 | 10 | 47 | 38 |
| I know how to use different learning strategies. | 31 | 38 | 23 | 14 | 46 | 48 |
| I know how to use different problem solving strategies. | 15 | 43 | 23 | 10 | 62 | 47 |
| The Learning Mentor Program has helped motivate me to improve my learning. | 15 | 57 | 38 | 14 | 47 | 29 |
| The Learning Mentor Program has helped increase my confidence as a learner. | 31 | 43 | 15 | 29 | 54 | 28 |
APPENDIX 17: Year Level Data Summary Tables for Open-Ended Response Questions

For all open-ended response questions, the frequency of a response category was generated from the sum of its occurrence within responses that contained multiple themes, and from responses that contained single themes.

QUESTION 22: What have you learnt about yourself as a result of your relationship with your Learning Mentor?

Table 1: Question 22 Frequency of Response Category Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Category</th>
<th>Frequency of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure/don’t know</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Frequency of Response from Remainder of the Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Category</th>
<th>Frequency of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognition of Learning Mentor(s) help/support</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased self-efficacy</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal attributes</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement areas/challenges</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal learning and working styles</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**QUESTION 23:** What is the best thing about having a Learning Mentor?

**Table 2:** Question 23 Frequency of Response Category Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Category</th>
<th>Frequency of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and emotional support</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning support</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure/don’t know/nothing</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational/admin support</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**QUESTION 38:** What are the best things about the Learning Mentor Program?

**Table 3:** Question 38 Frequency of Response Category Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Category</th>
<th>Frequency of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Infrastructures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation of Learning Mentor Groups: Mix of students from Year 7 to Year 12</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Learning Mentor**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assistance/support from Learning Mentors(s)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family/team atmosphere within the Learning Mentor Group</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance from fellow Learning Mentor Group members</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Content/Activities</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time to complete academic tasks/homework/private study etc.</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning community gatherings and activities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not sure/Don’t know</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not sure/don’t know</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
QUESTION 39: What changes (if any) would you make to the Learning Mentor Program?

Table 4: Question 39 Frequency of Response Category Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Category</th>
<th>Frequency of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program Infrastructures</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase the number of Learning Mentor periods to two weekly</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocate Learning Mentors from two different learning areas to a Learning Mentor Group</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change Learning Mentor Groups at appropriate intervals</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Mentor Groups to consist of 1 year Level Only</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program Content/Activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More time to complete homework, assessment tasks, accessing assistance</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure Program content/activities are relevant to each Year Level</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter and intra Learning Community study/focus groups</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain Learning Mentor</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group/community/inter-community games and activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide different work environments during long</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Mentor lesson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Mentor</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor performance of Learning Mentors</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule regular one-on-one mentor/mentee sessions</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No Change</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No change</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 18: Student Focus Group Transcription

FILE DETAILS

Audio Length: 40 minutes
Audio Quality: ☑ High ☐ Average ☐ Low
Number of Facilitators: One
Number of Interviewees: Five
Difficult Interviewee Accents: No
Other Comments:

START OF TRANSCRIPT

Facilitator: This is a student focus group from the college and the students are going to comment on various things about the learning mentor program. So anyone can start. Can you just tell me about the organisation of the learning mentor program in terms of how many times you go to learning mentor. Maybe you want to talk about six learning communities, maybe any other feature of the program itself.

Interviewee: I like how we have the long period on Wednesday.
Facilitator: Why?
Interviewee: I don't know, it's good - we all sit there and we might play some games or you can do some study. It's just been good being together.

Facilitator: Do you think more than one long period a week would be good for you or are you happy with the way it is at the moment?
Interviewee: I wouldn't mind it. I reckon we should swap our PLE period for an LM period so we have two. I don't know, is that…
Facilitator: So PLE becomes LM?
Interviewee: Instead of going to…
Interviewee: Or even just the other morning is longer.
Facilitator: So at the moment, I think there's about eight minutes for learning mentor in the morning. Do you think that that's too short?
Interviewee: Sometimes, depending what's on the board and stuff so all your notices that we'll get sometimes the list is so long it's like, quick
fly through it and then it's like out you go. So it would be good to - if we need to ask questions about something so…

Interviewee: But if you wanted it to be longer you'd have to have it not just five minutes longer, like 10 or 15 so you can actually have time to do stuff such as work and everything, do you know what I mean?

Facilitator: Is the morning a good time to do work first up in the morning?

Interviewee: I study a lot and…

Interviewee: Yeah, I do a lot more work in the morning than…

Interviewee: I can't do work at night, I don't like it.

Interviewee: They say your memory's better in the morning anyway so…

Interviewee: I just think that it's actually good having it short and fast in the morning, I think for me, just because you go in there and you can say hello to everyone and then you just go straight to your classes. You keep going from one to the other whereas if I think it was a bit delayed we'd be really relaxed because my learning mentor's really relaxed - like environment, so…

Interviewee: Yeah, it wouldn't that rush, rush thing.

Facilitator: Do you like the six learning communities? Do you think that's the right number, too many, not enough?

Interviewee: I reckon it's good.

Interviewee: Yeah, I think it's good, because we're such a big school we need more.

Facilitator: What does the learning communities do then, when we divide them into six learning communities?

Interviewee: I like mine because I love how [Miss Amor] see more with our leader and she's awesome at - we really are sort of like together - I don't know.

Facilitator: A small group within a big group, is that what you're thinking or…

Interviewee: Yeah, because we're all like, oh yeah we're the [Malone] kids, like we just have this thing together.

Interviewee: It's meaningful.

Interviewee: Yeah, and with four communities there'll be too many people and you just wouldn't be - you wouldn't have that one-on-one time.

Interviewee: Yeah, I could probably say that I know every [Da Vinci] year 11.

Interviewee: Yeah, me too, I could name them all.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewee: I don't know, it creates a healthy competition kind of thing because of like - Malone, athletes you know, we're better.

Interviewee: And someone came up and they're like, God you came second.

Facilitator: Malone haven't won the athletics before, have they?

Interviewee: They haven't won anything.

Facilitator: Well, isn't that good that they've come up as big. Okay let's talk about your learning mentors now. What's the best thing about having a learning mentor?

Interviewee: Being able to talk to them and they know you personally.

Interviewee: Yeah, definitely…
Interviewee: I'm not as close with mine.
Interviewee: I love my LM. It sounds weird but...
Interviewee: I love my LM too.
Interviewee: …like [Ronnie and Davies], like so awesome but I think it's just good to have...
Facilitator: What makes her awesome? What does she do that makes it awesome for you?
Interviewee: She just asks me about my personal things, like she knows and stuff. So it's just like a closer relationship kind of thing and it's always good just in the morning to see someone, sit down for eight or so minutes or however long LM is and just kind of relax and talk and stuff. It's just good having that close relationship and seeing them at least once a day kind of thing, from my point of view.
Interviewee: Yeah, I'm the same. I just like how they know me because our LMs are so small that - I like that because my LM - she'll ask me about my mum and she'll say, how's your mum doing, how's things at home going? It's just good how we're on such a personal level.
Interviewee: You know them personally. You don't know them academically like your teachers. They ask how are you going with this work, are you right for the test and everything but your LM don't - well, they don't really know what's going on - that much academically so they would ask you about you or what you've been doing, like your hobbies outside of school.
Interviewee: They genuinely care. If your teachers in class like, how was your weekend, they're just asking it but your learning mentor actually cares and actually want to know how you are and everything.
Interviewee: I'm sure they care but not into a deeper level.
Interviewee: Yeah, that's what I mean and then in the school yard it's so good when you see your learning mentor and they come and say hi to you and everything. It's a [unclear], but yeah it's good.
Facilitator: What about the impact the programs have on your learning since it's a learning mentor program? Has it had any impact on your learning?
Interviewee: Well, I like it because I feel like I've always got that person to go to for help.
Facilitator: Help with your school work or help with everything in general?
Interviewee: I thought it was on learning but…
Facilitator: Yeah, I'm trying to see whether there is a connect. We call it learning mentor program, is that how the students see it that it's really - that it is as a learning…
Interviewee: Well, I see it - if I'm sitting in home base doing the homework I'd go to them for help and I don't know, I just feel like it's a good time to - if you do need that help with your learning, that's when I'd do it. Yeah, I don't know.
Interviewee: I think at the beginning I used to think they don't actually know any of my subjects or anything I do so it was sort of silly having interviews with them because mum used to book interviews and
so it was sort of like, we were telling her how I'm going, my learning mentor. So that was all right because you saw your teachers and interviews and everything but I think - I've got Ms [Malumby] and she's a maths teacher obviously and maths was hard for me last year. I was doing methods, I wasn't really confident with it. She was really helpful and I didn't feel like I was nagging my teacher for help all the time because I had her in long home base so, my learning mentor.

Facilitator: With the learning mentors, I just have heard a student say this and I'm just interested what your comment would be. They said it would be good if we had - when we allocated learning mentors to allocate two learning mentors to a group but they weren't from the same teaching area.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewee: As in like different departments.

Facilitator: I just was interested in your comment on that.

Interviewee: Yeah, I agree with that because that's a more widespread - people can have more help.

Interviewee: Yeah, humanities and a science and maths, that would be really helpful.

Interviewee: They'd have more range of knowledge and...

Interviewee: Yeah, because obviously when you ask a maths teacher for help with an essay they can help to an extent but they're probably like, not really the right person to be asking.

Facilitator: Tell me this, how much mentoring do you think you're doing yourselves in the classroom?

Interviewee: What do you mean?

Facilitator: With other students.

Interviewee: As in the younger levels?

Facilitator: Yeah, do you help ones in your own year level, ones below or ones above or is there any sort of that work being done in classrooms?

Interviewee: In other home base, like LMs and stuff, they seem to do that but with mine we kind of just all sit there in our separate year levels and don't really interact with each other which I hate. When [Maddie] will tell me about something - I've said your name.

Facilitator: I'll delete that.

Interviewee: Yeah, when she says something about what they've done in home base, I'll be like oh I wish we did something like that because our teachers don't really talk to us or anything. So sometimes...

Facilitator: You've got a different experience?

Interviewee: Mm, like sometimes I wish that we had that - more communication and stuff and just everyone being able to interact with each other and get to know each other more. I don't even know some of the girls' names in my home base so...

Interviewee: Really?

Interviewee: Uhuh.

Interviewee: Mine are so different to that.
Interviewee: Yeah, ours is really evident that we use each other for help and everything when picking subjects so I got so much help from the year 11s and 12s last year. I basically asked them everything about what subjects to take and everything and they help me.

[Interview interrupted - aside discussion]
Facilitator: So we'll just - won't even decide on what's happening there. That's okay. So that's a good point, so the course counselling was really good.

Interviewee: Yeah, because it started off with me asking my learning mentors about it and they said she's actually done that subject when he asked her about it and that's how I figured out what I was going to choose.

Interviewee: Yeah, that's the same with me.

Interviewee: Yeah, I find that I get a lot of help from the year 12s at my home base but I feel like the younger ones don't really come to me for help so the year 12s help us but I don't really feel that I have had a chance to mentor the others.

Facilitator: Would that be a good thing to have happen?

Interviewee: I like that the year 12s are willing to help us but I was talking to the year 10s. We were talking to them about subjects, what they wanted and stuff but yeah, I like how - because in our home base it's kind of like year 10, 11 and 12s are with one of our teachers and years 7, 8, 9s are with other one of our teacher. The year 10, 11, 12 group is really close. We all sort of sit together and the little ones are just - I don't know whether they're scared or what, they just don't really associate with us.

Interviewee: Yeah, our sevens and eights are pretty intimidated by the environment which I can understand. I remember being in year 7 and thinking those year 12s are so much older than me - the big kids.

Interviewee: They're so big.

Interviewee: Yeah, I used to think, oh my God, he's got a beard, he shouldn't be at school.

Interviewee: Yeah, like oh - but now that I'm year 11 I sort of don't find anyone scary in my home base, I mean, my learning mentor but I think it would be better if they - I suppose we can make an effort.

Interviewee: My home base is like the opposite. We have year 12s and they're just like - can I say one of them's name in year 12?

Facilitator: Mm.

Interviewee: Hickey, you know what he's like, and he just like gets the other year 8s and wrestles with them and talks to them and stuff. It sounds bad but, I don't know, it just breaks the ice kind of thing from like the younger to the older. I think my home base is good in that regard, like we all talk so…

Facilitator: You sound like you've got a great one going.

Interviewee: Yeah, I love my home - and the younger…

Facilitator: Is that Mr Walsh?

Interviewee: …and he's the hospitality leader so we always get food and I'm like…
Facilitator: That's being spoilt, isn't it, when you have that? So if you were
to say what are the best things about the learning mentor
program what would you say they are?

Interviewee: How small the group is.

Interviewee: How it's different year levels.

Interviewee: Yeah, getting to know other kids in different year levels and the
same with the kids in your year level. I'm really friends with all
the year 11s in my home base - in my learner mentor but I
probably wouldn't have got to know them well at all if I wasn't
in that.

Interviewee: I have my cousin in my home base.

Facilitator: Is that a good thing?

Interviewee: We like it because we - I don't know, we always talk about it but
I like it because it's also brought us closer and all my friends. I
have a couple of friends in my home base and [Sinead] gotten
really close with other people. I'll be honest, if they weren't in
my home base, I probably wouldn't talk to them now and it just
sort of brings us - having that hour on the Wednesday, I actually
look forward to it. I love long home base and it's like just fun,
like we all get along and we all...

Interviewee: I remember one of the guys in my home base used to hate me.
He used to bully me and now we're like two peas in a pod, so...

Interviewee: Is that [Toby]?

Interviewee: Yeah, it's funny how it brings people together.

Interviewee: The home base group, like year 11s, I'm good friends with all of
them but I wouldn't hang out with outside home base but you'd
say hi when you go past and you kind of have your own little
different friendship group with them. You have your own jokes
and you have your own things and it's good just to have different
friends in different times.

Facilitator: Tell me, what do you think are the current challenges that the
learning mentor program's got? Has it got any challenges?

Interviewee: That kids aren't coming to the school on Wednesday mornings.
They're deciding, I don't have a class, I just have learning
mentor period so they don't come until end of recess or
something. It doesn't affect me or anything but I just think that
could be a problem if everyone decided to do it then there's no
kids in learning mentor.

Facilitator: No one to mentor.

Interviewee: Because it's not a free period. If I'm late to school because I
either miss my bus or I have to walk but I don't know, I just look
forward to it because it's chill as well. It's not like I have to get
up and go straight into maths or something. It's kind of like you
can work your way into the day.

Interviewee: I agree.

Interviewee: That's why I just think it would be good to have a longer period
every day because it's just a good way to get on top of what's on
for the day, have a talk to people, get all your weekend stuff out
and then...

Interviewee: Like [unclear] on Wednesday.
Interviewee: That's what I'm saying, longer days. I just have conversations and then ease into your classes because I'm one of those people who just takes a while.

Interviewee: I think a challenge is that we obviously all like our home base but there's people in the home base who don't like it as much and I said to [Bucks] sometime because he's my LM - I said I hate how this home base is so - we all get along but it's really how we sit and don't mix with some people.

Interviewee: Yeah, set seats and…

Interviewee: I said I'd really like to get to know everyone more and do more group activities and everyone kind of just - then Bucks said, okay next week we'll start sitting next to each other. Everyone's saying oh no, why do that? Maddie, why did you say that? I'm like, we want to be able to mix more and everything and a lot of people don't enjoy it but, I don't know why, I really like it.

Interviewee: I didn't like it as much when I was younger but I like it now.

Interviewee: Yeah, when I was younger, I used to get a bit - there's nothing to do because you don't have homework when you're in the younger years so you wouldn't see it as homework time.

Interviewee: I was too scared to talk.

Interviewee: Exactly, the older kids but now we're the older kids, you know what I mean?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Facilitator: If you were to make any changes to the learning mentor program what would you make? What sort of changes would you make?

Interviewee: I don't really enjoy - this might be really negative but I don't enjoy when we have tasks to do. I understand we need to do goal setting and everything but…

Interviewee: And reflecting and, I just don't…

[Over speaking]

Interviewee: … I understand why it's been given but I just don't really want to do it.

Interviewee: I think that's a PLE thing. I think home base is more of a learning mentor - it's more of a - so that that's when you go and get your help, that's when you learn, that's when you study, that's when you bond. Is that what it's supposed to be?

Facilitator: Yeah, would you prefer to just come in and do your work, do your own work?

Interviewee: Yeah, it can either be like private study or…

Interviewee: Bond as well, then again I'd rather that in PLE than do work and have set tasks.

Interviewee: Yeah, but PLE is supposed to be that sort of…

Interviewee: Your own learning…

Interviewee: It's a bit hard. We sometimes do breakfasts and things so that sort of breaks up the morning but I don't know what else we could have.

Interviewee: I like to do more activities. We have these silly things like all learning mentors who go out on a Wednesday and play games…

[Over speaking]

Interviewee: …have big soccer championships.
Interviewee: I think that's fun.
Interviewee: Something like that would be fun.
Interviewee: We have tunnel ball and stuff like that.
Interviewee: We used to do like Malone's soccer championships, that was fun, because it brings us together. That's what I think.
Interviewee: It's gets the more academic kind of people in the home base out as well and involved. It brings them out...
Interviewee: And because we made it that like year 12 with a year 7, it was all age groups. It wasn't like a year 10 team. It was like home base versus home base so it was everybody in together and that's what sort of brought us together as well.
Facilitator: Do you think it would be a good idea if we had invited students to come in to help develop the learning mentor program?
Interviewee: I guess so. What do you mean? Have our input on how it works?
Facilitator: On what programs could look like.
Interviewee: So pretty much like what we're saying now, I guess?
Facilitator: Would that be useful for students?
Interviewee: Probably because when...
Interviewee: Because we all relate to each other.
Interviewee: You've got like your student opinion on it as well instead of just having it all based around what the teachers think they should do about it all. I don't know how they go about it but...
Interviewee: I wouldn't mind having a learning mentor at the end of the day, like last period.
Facilitator: Why is that?
Interviewee: Just because it's, you know...
Interviewee: End of the day...
Interviewee: ...it's a bit like wind down time but then I feel like people would see that as let's go home early.
Interviewee: Yeah, true.
Interviewee: You shouldn't be allowed to.
Interviewee: I know on the last day, that's all I'm going to do.
Interviewee: Can't they just lock the gates? I don't know.
Interviewee: Lock the gates?
Facilitator: Get them to crawl over the top. Okay, girls, anything else you'd like to say about the learning mentor program? Any thought of anything else?
Interviewee: I don't know. Is there - this has probably got nothing to do with what you're asking but are all the teachers in the school allocated to [LM]? Is there leftover?
Facilitator: No, every teacher's got an LM class and all of the non-teaching staff are allocated to a learning community in some way. So all the teaching staff have got a learning mentor except if they're part-time that doesn't allow that but the idea was to have all the teaching staff allocated to a learning mentor group and then to have - there are some non-teaching staff that have significant dealings with students allocated to them to ensure that we have the small numbers in the groups.
Then everybody including Mrs [McSweeney] from the front office - they're all allocated to a community so that sense of
belonging, it's there but yes everybody is. So any more comments girls?

Interviewee: I reckon sometimes - another thing on LMs but in my LM there are people who aren't - are rebellious students and they get in trouble a lot and a lot of the time Bucks is like focussed on them and they're getting in trouble and do you know what I'm talking about?

Facilitator: Yeah.

Interviewee: It feels like the rest of us is like, you know, we want to ask him questions but he might have to be dealing with that and because he's deputy principal now. We have our own LMs but we have the two LMs. I feel like I'm closer to Bucks and he knows me better than what my actual LM knows me so that's kind of hard for when we have our interviews next week, that she doesn't really know much about me but if it was with Bucks it would be a lot easier to talk and everything. So I think it should be...

Interviewee: What's also to do with her - I think LMs need to put in a bit more effort too.

Interviewee: Bucks definitely puts in more effort.

Interviewee: So yeah mine just sit up the front and talk to...

Interviewee: Yeah, so I don't like that either like how sometimes they just come and do the roll and then okay let's just sit here and wait for the bell now. I think they should engage us more.

Interviewee: Now that we've got Miss Davis now - she's really helped bring out LM together. We're doing footy tips and stuff like that. Before we had her, it was just teachers would be out the front and we'd just be sitting there.

Facilitator: Well, girls fantastic. Thank you very much.

END OF TRANSCRIPT
APPENDIX 19: ALL LEARNING MENTORS CLOSED-RESPONSE ITEM DATA

SUMMARY OF PARTICIPATION DATA

Number of Participants = 62
Learning Mentors (Teaching Staff) = 49
Learning Mentors (Non-Teaching Staff) = 13

Part A: THE LEARNING MENTOR PROGRAM (PROCESSES)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Learning Mentor Data</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has clear aims which are known to me.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has met my expectations.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a good structure: 6 Learning Communities with each Learning Community divided into Learning Mentor Groups.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides the right mix of learning and community activities in the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides interesting and relevant activities to complete in the Learning Mentor Period.</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has allocated the right amount of time weekly to the learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs to allocate more time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs to allocate less time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Part B: THE LEARNING MENTOR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Learning Mentor Data: The Learning Mentor Role</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree %</th>
<th>Undecided %</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I had enough training/professional learning before becoming a Learning Mentor.</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is enough ongoing support to help me meet the challenges of mentoring.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand what my role is as a Learning Mentor.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often reflect on my effectiveness as a Learning Mentor.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part C: WORKING WITH MY LEARNING MENTOR GROUP (EFFECTIVENESS OF RELATIONSHIPS)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Learning Mentor Data: Effectiveness of Relationships</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree %</th>
<th>Undecided %</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As a result of the Program, the students in my Learning Mentor Group feel connected to a significant adult.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have developed a good relationship with my Learning Mentor Group.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how the students in my Learning Mentor Group learn best.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I recognise the achievements of the students in my Learning Mentor Group.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I regularly update the parents/guardians of the progress of the students in my Learning Mentor Group.</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students consolidate relationships within the Learning Mentor Group.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Part D: THE LEARNING MENTOR PROGRAM (IMPACT)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Learning Mentor Data: Program Impact</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree %</th>
<th>Undecided %</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor period is an important part of my weekly schedule of classes.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Learning Mentor Group provides a caring, supporting and encouraging environment for the students.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I encourage members of my Learning Mentor Group to help each other.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students understand how they learn best.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students become more independent learners.</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students improve organisational skills.</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students improve grades and test scores.</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students develop better communication skills.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students develop better teamwork skills.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students set learning goals.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students to use different learning strategies.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students to use different problem solving strategies.</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students to develop their confidence as a learner.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor Program has helped motivate students to improve their learning.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 20: Teacher Mentor/Non-Teacher Mentor Closed-Response Item Data

SUMMARY OF PARTICIPATION DATA

Number of Participants = 62

Learning Mentors (Teaching Staff) = 49
Learning Mentors (Non-Teaching Staff) = 13

Part A: THE LEARNING MENTOR PROGRAM (PROCESSES)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Mentor/Non-Teacher Mentor Data</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Non-Teacher</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has clear aims which are known to me.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has met my expectations.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a good structure: 6 Learning Communities with each Learning Community divided into Learning Mentor Groups.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides the right mix of learning and community activities in the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides interesting and relevant activities to complete in the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has allocated the right amount of time weekly to the learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs to allocate more time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs to allocate less time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Part B: THE LEARNING MENTOR

**Teacher Mentor/Non-Teacher Mentor Data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Learning Mentor Role</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree %</th>
<th>Undecided %</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I had enough training/professional learning before becoming a Learning Mentor.</td>
<td>Teacher: 37 Non-Teacher: 39</td>
<td>Teacher: 20 Non-Teacher: 15</td>
<td>Teacher: 43 Non-Teacher: 46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is enough ongoing support to help me meet the challenges of mentoring.</td>
<td>Teacher: 24 Non-Teacher: 8</td>
<td>Teacher: 20 Non-Teacher: 31</td>
<td>Teacher: 56 Non-Teacher: 61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand what my role is as a Learning Mentor.</td>
<td>Teacher: 9 Non-Teacher: 0</td>
<td>Teacher: 11 Non-Teacher: 15</td>
<td>Teacher: 80 Non-Teacher: 85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often reflect on my effectiveness as a Learning Mentor.</td>
<td>Teacher: 24 Non-Teacher: 23</td>
<td>Teacher: 13 Non-Teacher: 15</td>
<td>Teacher: 63 Non-Teacher: 62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Part C: WORKING WITH MY LEARNING MENTOR GROUP (EFFECTIVENESS OF RELATIONSHIPS)

**Teacher Mentor/Non-Teacher Mentor Data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effectiveness of Relationships</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree %</th>
<th>Undecided %</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As a result of the Program, the students in my Learning Mentor Group feel connected to a significant adult.</td>
<td>Teacher: 2 Non-Teacher: 0</td>
<td>Teacher: 22 Non-Teacher: 25</td>
<td>Teacher: 76 Non-Teacher: 75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have developed a good relationship with my Learning Mentor Group.</td>
<td>Teacher: 2 Non-Teacher: 0</td>
<td>Teacher: 2 Non-Teacher: 0</td>
<td>Teacher: 96 Non-Teacher: 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how the students in my Learning Mentor Group learn best.</td>
<td>Teacher: 33 Non-Teacher: 8</td>
<td>Teacher: 38 Non-Teacher: 25</td>
<td>Teacher: 29 Non-Teacher: 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I recognise the achievements of the students in my Learning Mentor Group.</td>
<td>Teacher: 7 Non-Teacher: 0</td>
<td>Teacher: 13 Non-Teacher: 8</td>
<td>Teacher: 80 Non-Teacher: 92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I regularly update the parents/guardians of the progress of the students in my Learning Mentor Group.</td>
<td>Teacher: 49 Non-Teacher: 25</td>
<td>Teacher: 16 Non-Teacher: 17</td>
<td>Teacher: 35 Non-Teacher: 58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students consolidate relationships within the Learning Mentor Group.</td>
<td>Teacher: 18 Non-Teacher: 25</td>
<td>Teacher: 27 Non-Teacher: 19</td>
<td>Teacher: 55 Non-Teacher: 56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Part D: THE LEARNING MENTOR PROGRAM (IMPACT)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Mentor/Non-Teacher Mentor Data</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree %</th>
<th>Undecided %</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Non-Teacher</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Non-Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor period is an important part of my weekly schedule of classes.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Learning Mentor Group provides a caring, supporting and encouraging environment for the students.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I encourage members of my Learning Mentor Group to help each other.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students understand how they learn best.</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students become more independent learners.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students improve organisational skills.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students improve grades and test scores.</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students develop better communication skills.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students develop better teamwork skills.</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students set learning goals.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students to use different learning strategies.</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students to use different problem solving strategies.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students to develop their confidence as a learner.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor Program has helped motivate students to improve their learning.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 21: Teacher Mentor Leadership Role/Teacher Mentor No Leadership Role Closed-Response Item Data

Summary of Participation Data

*Number of Participants = 49*

Learning Mentors (Leadership Role) = 19
Learning Mentors (Non-Leadership Role) = 30

Part A: THE LEARNING MENTOR PROGRAM (PROCESSES)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Mentor Leadership Role/Teacher Mentor No Leadership Role Data</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responses to: The Learning Mentor Program ……</td>
<td>Leader</td>
<td>Non-Leader</td>
<td>Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has clear aims which are known to me.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has met my expectations.</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a good structure: 6 Learning Communities with each Learning Community divided into Learning Mentor Groups.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides the right mix of learning and community activities in the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides interesting and relevant activities to complete in the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has allocated the right amount of time weekly to the learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs to allocate more time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs to allocate less time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part B: THE LEARNING MENTOR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Learning Mentor Role</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree %</th>
<th>Undecided %</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I had enough training/professional learning before becoming a Learning Mentor.</td>
<td>Leader 47  Non-Leader 32</td>
<td>Leader 0  Non-Leader 28</td>
<td>Leader 53  Non-Leader 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is enough ongoing support to help me meet the challenges of mentoring.</td>
<td>Leader 16  Non-Leader 23</td>
<td>Leader 21  Non-Leader 23</td>
<td>Leader 63  Non-Leader 54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand what my role is as a Learning Mentor.</td>
<td>Leader 5  Non-Leader 8</td>
<td>Leader 11  Non-Leader 12</td>
<td>Leader 84  Non-Leader 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often reflect on my effectiveness as a Learning Mentor.</td>
<td>Leader 11  Non-Leader 30</td>
<td>Leader 0  Non-Leader 20</td>
<td>Leader 89  Non-Leader 50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part C: WORKING WITH MY LEARNING MENTOR GROUP (EFFECTIVENESS OF RELATIONSHIPS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effectiveness of Relationships</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree %</th>
<th>Undecided %</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As a result of the Program, the students in my Learning Mentor Group feel connected to a significant adult.</td>
<td>Leader 0  Non-Leader 3</td>
<td>Leader 11  Non-Leader 29</td>
<td>Leader 89  Non-Leader 68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have developed a good relationship with my Learning Mentor Group.</td>
<td>Leader 0  Non-Leader 3</td>
<td>Leader 0  Non-Leader 3</td>
<td>Leader 100  Non-Leader 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how the students in my Learning Mentor Group learn best.</td>
<td>Leader 26  Non-Leader 29</td>
<td>Leader 16  Non-Leader 45</td>
<td>Leader 58  Non-Leader 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I recognise the achievements of the students in my Learning Mentor Group.</td>
<td>Leader 0  Non-Leader 8</td>
<td>Leader 5  Non-Leader 16</td>
<td>Leader 95  Non-Leader 76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I regularly update the parents/guardians of the progress of the students in my Learning Mentor Group.</td>
<td>Leader 37  Non-Leader 47</td>
<td>Leader 16  Non-Leader 16</td>
<td>Leader 47  Non-Leader 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students consolidate relationships within the Learning Mentor Group.</td>
<td>Leader 0  Non-Leader 29</td>
<td>Leader 16  Non-Leader 29</td>
<td>Leader 84  Non-Leader 42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Part D: THE LEARNING MENTOR PROGRAM (IMPACT)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Mentor Leadership Role/Teacher Mentor No Leadership Role Data</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree %</th>
<th>Undecided %</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leader</td>
<td>Non-Leader</td>
<td>Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor period is an important part of my weekly schedule of classes.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My LMG provides a caring, supporting and encouraging environment for the students.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I encourage members of my Learning Mentor Group to help each other.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students understand how they learn best.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students become more independent learners.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students improve organisational skills.</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students improve grades and test scores.</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students develop better communication skills.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students develop better teamwork skills.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students set learning goals.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students to use different learning strategies.</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students to use different problem solving strategies.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students to develop their confidence as a learner.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor Program has helped motivate students to improve their learning.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 22: Teacher Mentors With ≤ 10 Years Teaching Experience/ Teacher Mentors With > 10 Years Teaching Experience Closed Response Item Data

SUMMARY OF PARTICIPATION DATA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Participants = 57</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-10 years Experience = 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 years Experience = 36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part A: THE LEARNING MENTOR PROGRAM (PROCESSES)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Mentors ≤ 10 years Teaching Experience/Teacher Mentors &gt; 10 years Teaching Experience</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-10 Years</td>
<td>More than 10 Years</td>
<td>0-10 Years</td>
<td>More than 10 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has clear aims which are known to me.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has met my expectations.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a good structure: 6 Learning Communities with each Learning Community divided into Learning Mentor Groups.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides the right mix of learning and community activities in the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides interesting and relevant activities to complete in the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has allocated the right amount of time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs to allocate more time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs to allocate less time weekly to the Learning Mentor period.</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Part B: THE LEARNING MENTOR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Learning Mentor Role</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greater than 10 Years</td>
<td>0-10 Years</td>
<td>Greater than 10 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had enough training/professional learning before becoming a Learning Mentor.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is enough ongoing support to help me meet the challenges of mentoring.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand what my role is as a Learning Mentor.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often reflect on my effectiveness as a Learning Mentor.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Part C: WORKING WITH MY LEARNING MENTOR GROUP (EFFECTIVENESS OF RELATIONSHIPS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effectiveness of Relationships</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More than 10 Years</td>
<td>0-10 Years</td>
<td>More than 10 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a result of the Program, the students in my Learning Mentor Group feel connected to a significant adult.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have developed a good relationship with my Learning Mentor Group.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how the students in my Learning Mentor Group learn best.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I recognise the achievements of the students in my Learning Mentor Group.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I regularly update the parents/guardians of the progress of the students in my LMG.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students consolidate relationships within the Learning Mentor Group.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Part D: THE LEARNING MENTOR PROGRAM (IMPACT)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Mentors ≤ 10 years Teaching Experience/Teacher Mentors &gt; 10 years Teaching Experience</th>
<th>Program Impact</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>More than 10 Years</td>
<td>0-10 Years</td>
<td>More than 10 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor period is an important part of my weekly schedule of classes.</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Learning Mentor Group provides a caring, supporting and encouraging environment for the students.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I encourage members of my Learning Mentor Group to help each other.</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students understand how they learn best.</td>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students become more independent learners.</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students improve organisational skills.</td>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students improve grades and test scores.</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students develop better communication skills.</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students develop better teamwork skills.</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students set learning goals.</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students to use different learning strategies.</td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students to use different problem solving strategies.</td>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities completed in the Learning Mentor period have helped my students to develop their confidence as a learner.</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Mentor Program has helped motivate students to improve their learning.</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 23: Learning Mentor Data Summary Tables for Open-Ended Response Questions

For all open-ended response questions, the frequency of a response category was generated from the sum of its occurrence within responses that contained multiple themes, and from responses that contained single themes.

QUESTION 18: (a) What are the best things about being a Learning Mentor?

Table 1: Question 18 (a) Frequency of Response Category Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Category</th>
<th>Frequency of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All LMs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building and sustaining trusting and supportive relationships with mentees</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building relationships with parents/families of mentees</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing a sense of community within the Learning Mentor Group</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring a student from Year 7 through to Year 12</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting mentee learning</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**QUESTION 18:** (b) What are the challenges of being a Learning Mentor?

**Table 2:** Question 18 (b) Frequency of Response Category Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Category</th>
<th>Frequency of Response</th>
<th>All LMs</th>
<th>Teach LMs</th>
<th>Non Teach LMs</th>
<th>Teach + Lead LMs</th>
<th>Teach + No Lead LMs</th>
<th>Teach ≤ 10yrs LMs</th>
<th>Teach &gt; 10yrs LMs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managing administrative and mentoring demands of role alongside teaching or non-teaching role</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing a relationship with each mentee</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting mentees’ learning</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting mentees with a diversity of needs (including behavioural)</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not having enough structured, relevant and differentiated content to deliver in Program</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging all students in the Program</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring students not taught by the mentor</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentors not receiving information from the teacher of the mentee</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference between mentors in carrying out role</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**QUESTION 39:** (a) What are the best things about the Learning Mentor Program?

**Table 3:** Question 39 (a) Frequency of Response Category Data

| Response Category | Frequency of Response |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|-------------------|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
|                   | All LMs               | Teach LMs | Non Teach LMs | Teach + Lead LMs | Teach + No Lead LMs | Teach ≤ 10yrs LMs | Teach > 10yrs LMs |
| Balance of Program activities and independent work | 6 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Opportunity for students to get help with their work from the mentor | 6 | 6 | - | 2 | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| Promotion of learning independence | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | - | 1 | - |
| Program makes students accountable for their learning | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| Program helps students to achieve their goals | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | - | 1 | - |
| Workshops offered in long Learning Mentor lesson | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| Discussion of progress and pathways with mentees | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| Students have onsite advocate in the mentor | 1 | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | 1 |
**QUESTION 39:** (b) What are the Learning Mentor Program’s challenges?

**Table 4:** Question 39 (b) Frequency of Response Category Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Category</th>
<th>Frequency of Response</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All LMs</td>
<td>Teach LMs</td>
<td>Non Teach LMs</td>
<td>Teach + Lead LMs</td>
<td>Teach + No Lead LMs</td>
<td>Teach ≤ 10yrs LMs</td>
<td>Teach &gt; 10yrs LMs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement of all stakeholders in the Program – students and mentors</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing relevant, differentiated and learning focussed Program content</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivering original Program intent i.e. supporting mentees as learners</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing professional learning for mentors</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**QUESTION 40:** What benefits have accrued for you as a result of participating in the Program?

**Table 5:** Question 40 Frequency of Response Category Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Category</th>
<th>Frequency of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All LMs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stronger relationships with mentees</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stronger relationships with parents/families of mentees</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased sense of connectedness to the school</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction from seeing mentees improve in their learning life</td>
<td>6</td>
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</table>
**QUESTION 41:** What changes (if any) would you make to the Learning Mentor Program?

**Table 6:** Question 41 Frequency of Response Category Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Category</th>
<th>Frequency of Response</th>
<th>All LMs</th>
<th>Teach LMs</th>
<th>Non Teach LMs</th>
<th>Teach + Lead LMs</th>
<th>Teach + No Lead LMs</th>
<th>Teach ≤ 10yrs LMs</th>
<th>Teach &gt; 10yrs LMs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop and resource a relevant, differentiated and learning focussed Program curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide ongoing professional learning for mentors</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase the number of Learning Community events to balance the Program</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set expectations of Learning Mentors and monitor performance</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set expectations of Learning Community Leaders and monitor performance</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**QUESTION 42:** Any other comments you would like to make about the Learning Mentor Program?

**Table 7: Question 42 Frequency of Response Category Data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Category</th>
<th>Frequency of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All LMs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No other comment</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for Program intent</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set expectations of Learning Mentors and monitor performance</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set expectations of Learning Community Leaders and monitor performance</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition Program still in development phase</td>
<td>6</td>
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</table>
APPENDIX 24: Ten Learning Mentor Semi-Structured Interview Transcripts

INTERVIEW 1 (10010305/COB)

FILE DETAILS
Audio Length: 23 minutes
Audio Quality: ☑ High ☐ Average ☐ Low
Number of Facilitators: One
Number of Interviewees: One
Difficult Interviewee Accents: ☑ Yes ☐ No
Other Comments:

START OF TRANSCRIPT

Facilitator: Now, [Carmel] is a Learning Mentor with the Learning Mentor Program, but a non-teaching Learning Mentor. So Carmel, can you comment on the structure of the Learning Mentor Program? In terms of Learning Communities and Learning Mentor groups etc. - anything you would like to comment on?

Interviewee: I think that the set up of it is generally fairly good. I think it depends a lot on the personality of the people that you've got operating within the system. Having a Learning Mentor is then having the support of a Learning Community leader, in my situation has been really good. My Learning Community leader has been a fantastic support when required, but I know that that's not the case with everybody. The organisation of it, it seems to run fairly smoothly. Things can get a bit messy sometimes. The organisation doesn't necessarily run as smoothly as what I'd like it to, things can - tend to be little bit last minute. When they're a bit last minute then there's a bit of chaos that goes on with it and trying to communicate things to staff and then to students. Then confusion can kick in around that area and that's where it kind of throws it out a little bit.

The Learning Mentor period, it's - within the kids and from the kids' point of view, it seems to have turned into a study period for a lot of them. They tend to get a bit antsy when that period is not allocated as a study period anymore. Because it hasn't seem to have been a lot of focus in quite a lot of the time slots and things like that. When we hit times where they know that there is definite things planned in there and they've got purpose for them, then they're okay with it. But if they know that beforehand they're okay, if they don't know that, and it gets sprung upon
them, then they get a bit antsy about that. They know that comes back to the organisation factor again.

But then that - it's not necessarily just the kids either. If the staff don't know what's going on and things just get sprung on them, it makes it a bit complex.

But generally it works - it's - I think it's a really good program.

Having the smaller group of kids who are - and mentored by the one person, is much better than having really large groups of kids that you're trying to keep track of.

Facilitator: What about in terms of your preparation for the role?

Interviewee: For the actual marking of the role?

Facilitator: No, for the role of a Learning Mentor.

Interviewee: Oh for the role of a Learning Mentor. Because I was employed at the school as the whole program was being brought in here, but I wasn't actually a Learning Mentor initially, I just picked up Learning Mentor when another staff member left. The training that I actually got was just the little fringy bits, when it initially came in. Then just a very, very brief handover on specific students from the prior Learning Mentor. Beyond that there wasn't really anything.

It took about 18 months I think of me asking to be able to be included in the Restorative Practices training that they were doing, so that I could get that training. So that then I actually had something that I could - when these tricky situations came up, that I could actually then have something to fall back on and some skills that I could use with it. But because - I don't know whether it was because I had been here as staff when the program was initiated that they assumed that I would already know all of that stuff.

But I wasn't included in a lot of the training to start with, because I wasn't going to be a Learning Mentor. So when I stepped into the role there wasn't really a lot at all.

Facilitator: Can you talk to me about what you think the role of a Learning Mentor actually is?

Interviewee: The role of a Learning Mentor is - well in my opinion, it's knowing the children and knowing the best ways that they actually learn. Being that I'm not a teaching member of staff I can't actually help them with their class work. But I can put them in direct contact with their teachers and refer them to other people if they're not quite grasping things the way that their teachers are teaching them things. I can direct them to other places where they can look at other options and different ways of doing things.

With that in mind, I tend to be the primary contact between the family and the school and look at a lot of the non-class side of things, a lot of the pastoral sort of things, I guess. The complexities and the things - the - looking at the whole person rather than just the student in the classroom type stuff. That can be a really tricky balancing game with some of the students that I've got, requiring quite a lot of special needs in those areas.
Because I've had some fairly complex students within my Learning Mentor group. The teachers have got their class stuff all under control, but there's been a lot of issues outside of the classroom that actually need attention as well. The class teachers don't give the attention for outside of the classroom, so that's been a really good thing for those students I think. It's given - I know that it's given a lot of the parents some peace of mind to know that they've got somebody that they can actually call or email or whatever. Then that there will be a follow up with it as well.

Facilitator: Talk to me about the impact of the program on the learning life of the students. Do you think there has been one?

Interviewee: I think so. I think with a lot of the students - I think it also depends on the Learning Mentor. If - because we've got a smaller group of students that we're actually looking after and that we're mentoring, if there's issues, the teachers can contact us as well. We can then - we're another person who sees the student every day, who can make them more responsible about their learning.

So if the students are behind with a subject or having difficulties with a subject, they may only see that teacher three times a week. There's another two days there that teachers are not even getting the option or the opportunity to ask them how they're doing and to touch base with them. Whereas we see them every morning and we can sort of touch base and say, how are you going with that? Are you progressing with it? Are you hitting problems with it? Do I need to try and get in contact with that teacher and we can find a time where you can catch up outside of class? Because we do have that contact every day of the week.

Facilitator: What do you think are the best things about the program?

Interviewee: Probably - from my perspective it would be the contact with the students and the relationship that you have with the students and their families. You get to have a really good connection with them and you get to see them as a whole person, like the outside of school stuff. But you also get to see how they're doing across all of their subjects, not just one subject. So you might see them within their strong subject, or a teacher might see them within their weak subject. But we get to see across the board and have a look at the whole spectrum of things.

So you can see whether it's - if there's problems or anything like that, whether it's a subject specific issue or if it's an actual bigger issue that stretches across everything.

But the relationships with the students are fantastic, and the relationships with the families that you can have are fantastic as well. So lots of positives that can come out of that side of it.

Facilitator: Do you think that the program has any challenges currently?

Interviewee: Definitely has some challenges. The organisation factor, as I mentioned earlier, things just need to be organised. Because
both staff and students get frustrated when things are just popped on them. They don’t get a chance to prepare for them or work around them and allow and organise their schedules to fit that in. Because if they’re relying on having time to do one thing and then something else gets thrown in the mix, it can throw them out.

The level of commitment - oh not so much commitment, but the level of action that is applied within different Learning Mentors themselves, is probably one of those things. But I don’t know that you would ever be able to actually fix that because it’s just different personalities and different people having different work ethics and that kind of thing. Because some people put in heaps and go the extra nine yards and all that sort of stuff, but then there’s other people who will do just the bare minimum that is required. But that’s a broader issue and that comes up everywhere anyway, and in every situation. There’s always some people that will go above and beyond and others that will just do what they have to.

If you’ve got people who are doing the just what they have to, it doesn’t work anywhere near as well. Because they don’t have the relationship and the connection and the kids really just don’t seem to want to be there. That ends up being a negative kind of experience for everybody.

Facilitator: What have been the best things for you about being a Learning Mentor?

Interviewee: I’ve got to know the students a lot better. I’ve got to know the families a lot better. I’ve got to know a lot more of the staff a lot better. My role within the school has changed each year, and so my spectrum of what I actually know, my skill set, is expanding generally anyway. So that then stretches across what I can then apply in my Learning Mentor group as well. But yeah the relationships are definitely an amazing side of things. But yeah, and then seeing the kids succeed and coming out and being so proud and so pleased with what they’re actually doing. They get stuck with something more, hit a hurdle or a lump or a bump in the road and being able to come out the other side of it, and be okay, and be really proud of themselves. Just being able to get through some tough situations and still be okay out the other side and get through things.

Facilitator: Would you make any changes to the Learning Mentor program as it is?

Interviewee: I don’t know. I would probably - I would like to see it change in - while it does need to still have a lot of flexibility in it, it does need to have a bit structure to it. Like some - the organisational things - I’m yeah, very much repeating myself. But when you get that it then makes everything else flow through. If you’ve got things organised and there’s clear structure and everyone that’s involved knows about it and then it can just flow. The others things don’t then become big things, because everything is there.
When the other - the other curveballs of life pop up along the way, then you can work around that. Because you know what's already happening and so you've got the room and the time to allow for it. Rather than having multiple things thrown at you at once, because you don't know what's going on with one thing or the other.

Facilitator: Have you got anything else you want to say about the program?
Interviewee: I do really like it. I think it is a fantastic program and there is lots of benefits from it. But as with any program within a school this size or any size within a new program operating anywhere, there's always going to be room to grow.

Facilitator: Would you say that there's been some personal benefits for you?
Interviewee: Yes. Definitely. It's made me - it's probably made me a little bit more answerable to what I actually do. Because I know that there's other people then reliant on it as well. Like my students are actually reliant on what I'm doing and I'm answerable to all the people that I work for, but I'm also then answerable to the students and their parents. So it gives me that other level of responsibility that I feel obliged to.

Facilitator: Thanks Carmel, terrific.
Interviewee: No problems.

END OF TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEW 2 (10010306/LWS)

FILE DETAILS
Audio Length: 25 minutes
Audio Quality: ☑ High ☐ Average ☐ Low
Number of Facilitators: One
Number of Interviewees: One
Difficult Interviewee Accents: ☑ Yes ☐ No
Other Comments:

START OF TRANSCRIPT
Facilitator: Hello [Lisa]…
Interviewee: We're good to go.
Facilitator: We're good to go? On this one we are looking - we've been talking to Lisa and Lisa is a non-teaching Learning Mentor in the school.
Lisa, can you comment on the current structure of the Learning Mentor Program, in terms of anything you would like to speak about.
Interviewee: Well the program has certainly changed in structure and content over the last several years that it's been running. Initially it interested me because I had been part of our home-based structure that we had, which was quite a pastoral role. It was a great opportunity to make some connections with students and some relationships with parents.
Learning Mentor has changed in that, there still is that pastoral contact and I think that's one of the strengths of the program. That does work well with students that do have difficulties, whether it be at school or at home, being able to fit in and do that. But also, the program also is there to facilitate an opportunity to get to know the student as a learner. I feel that the program has dabbled in that but it's not its strength at this point in time. Certainly we've had a go at a number of different programs, a number of different learning platforms to facilitate that. But at this stage I still think that we're quite in our infancy in that part of the program.

Facilitator: In terms of being a Learning Mentor, do you think the training was adequate for you to understand what the role of a Learning Mentor was?

Interviewee: I think initially the way in which it was sold I think we were given - I wouldn't say probably adequate training, but we were informed on what the big picture was and where we were headed. There's still a number of things that are missing out of it, particularly in a pastoral role. I'm fortunate myself, that I've done a couple of different courses around wellbeing and counselling. But I think that that's not offered to all staff, and particularly not offered to Learning Mentors who are non-teaching staff. I think sometimes teachers get some of that through their teacher training and their experience, but as a non-teaching staff member certainly that's not been provided. So when you do come across issues, particularly around mental health, which unfortunately, is quite a big issue in our teenage years. I don't think there's been a lot of information given to us about how to handle that. Also there wasn't very much training about dealing with difficult parents. So they're just within that pastoral role.

I don't think that there's always enough information given out to Learning Mentors around knowing what's going on within the curriculum as well. Depending on your role within the school, what information you have. So when you're asked to be advising students on curriculum, subject choices and trying to work with them in bettering their learning, there hasn't always been a lot of support or training in that. Certainly at the beginning a lot of the focus was around training and learning how to provide opportunities for the students to get to know each other. How to get - to have a sense of community within those structures, because the students had been taken out of the familiar and put into the unfamiliar. So probably in that first year there was quite a few resources provided, lots of conversations around that opportunity to get the kids to know one another.

But as we then started to go into the program, often programs for the sessions would be introduced at the very last minute. You'd put in effort and you'd do some planning and then something would change and you'd have to change that.
flexible is certainly important when you're working in a school. But I know from speaking from a non-teaching point of view that often you sweat a little bit more about making sure that your content and what you're delivering to the students is going to be equivalent to your teaching partner. So some of that chopping and changing does make that difficult to deliver that.

Also, I don't think we've had a really strong consistency in making sure that we offer the same opportunities within the program to each year level as the years progress through. So we've certainly had - we'll have a focus on a particular area and it would - some of the programs that we've had have been fantastic. But then as the year ticks over and a new group of students come in, we don't have the same opportunity to work with the programs with that, we've moved onto a new area.

So that's probably one of my biggest things within the program, that I think the Learning Community leaders have a good sense of where they think they would like the program to go, but that's not always fully communicated to all Learning Mentors.

Facilitator: What do you think are the best things about the Learning Mentor program?

Interviewee: I think it's certainly knowing that I have 13 students that I have a really good relationship with and also with their parents. I think it helps in a school now where we are over 1000 students, that you're not one in 1000, you're one in 13. Or - and then when we're joined together you're one in 26. But I think the strength of the program is the fact that you do just have such a small group to work with, but you also have a partner in that and you work with the partner's group as well.

So I think that mentoring between Learning Mentors and particularly, I know within my own mentor group, I'm very fortunate that [Paul] is a very experienced teacher. So I can learn a lot from what he's got to offer and a lot of the way that he interacts with the kids too. So I value that opportunity. But I certainly think our strength is the small numbers in being able to break that down, so that you've just got a small group to work with.

Facilitator: Do you think we've got any challenges at the moment within the program?

Interviewee: Yeah I think that we perhaps don't have a really strong and clear direction. I think each time the Learning Community leaders rotate those roles and each year they seem to change a focus, and sometimes to the extent throw the baby out with the bathwater. So there's been some really good things that have happened in the program that we've never seen come back again. Certainly, I'm fortunate, my community leader is really good at communicating, we get plenty of information as it comes through, plenty of emails, minutes are typed up. She does a really great job in making sure as a Learning Mentor we're informed.
But I think that the program itself really needs to be relooked at and actually a decision made as to which way we go. Whether this is really about assisting the students with the development of their learning, and being able to know what their learning style is and how that they can improve on that, with a pastoral content. Or whether it's really just a pastoral activity, where we get together and socialise and celebrate birthdays and work together. I don't see at this stage, a really strong thing one way or another with that.

So I think that the challenge within that, is to try and make sure that everybody has a firm understanding of where we're heading. I think the production of the Learning Mentor handbook was a great idea. But it only was made and given out to new Learning Mentors coming in. So it was only sort of recently that we suggested [Nat] our community leader actually produce one for all of us. So it was good to read what the expectation was and how that had changed since we'd first started the program.

It still is - I still don't think that the program is strong in how it's running. I think that we need to have some components of it that are formalised and structured and repeat each year, so that we get that opportunity. Certainly we did a lot of work with the kids about them knowing their learning styles, but we've never revisited that. So the students that have come in, in the last three years, have not done any of those type of activities. I think that those kind of things should be fitting in.

Also, I sometimes think we try to cram too much into Learning Mentor. So we'll plan activities and things that we think will suit our students. So for example, two Year 7s struggling with time management, had a session set up just to dedicate to them and then the decision was made that we would have a community meeting. Or we had another activity that we had to go and attend and we broke up. So then that gets put off as well.

I understand that that allows us not to have a loss of learning time for staff, for losing teaching time in their classrooms. But if we really value the program then we shouldn't perhaps be using that just as a filler, I suppose, mmmm.

Facilitator: What about for you personally? Has being a Learning Mentor given anything to you personally?

Interviewee: Certainly taught me patience I think. Confidence in a few different areas around working with the students. I think if you're not involved in the program itself then you lose the opportunity to have a firm grip on what's going across the whole breadth of the school. I think by having access where you're talking to students from 7 to 12, you get more of a handle on what's going on across the school. It forces you to know more about each of the year levels as well. I think for me that's been good, it's certainly allowed me to open up and know what's going on more within the school too.

I enjoy that opportunity to work with the kids in that one-on-one too. I've certainly had some really challenging students in my
Learning Mentor that have required quite large amounts of time outside the Learning Mentor structure for support. For not only them but for their families. So I guess to an extent that's given me an opportunity to learn different ways to manage and assist people too.

I enjoy the time, I don't ever turn up in the morning and regret having to go and do that. I always - I like the information that the kids come and share with you as well. It could be something as small as they've got a new dog, or mum or dad is getting remarried, or they've got an overseas trip. It's just - I love that spark and the fact that those kids then will seek you out to come and talk to you about their concerns, or just to celebrate good things. I like that as well.

Facilitator: What would you say at this point, are the key challenges that the Learning Mentor program has got?

Interviewee: Hmm, I guess that it is sort of still more about having more formal structure. I think that from the leadership point of view I look at Learning Community leaders as having a lot more to do with wellbeing and behavioural management. I don't see a lot of leadership coming out of there up around actually the development of the learning programs. They certainly are doing it and producing documents, I'm not saying that they're not doing that.

But my initial understanding of the program for it to be about assisting students in a way to learn better for themselves. For us to facilitate that and to deliver opportunities for learning about time management and study techniques and to better themselves. I haven't seen a lot of that really in the program that's come through.

So I think that the challenges really are about making sure that we have a set direction on the way we want this program to run. As I say, either it is more of a wellbeing, behavioural, management style or it is more about the learning, or maybe it's a combination of both. But at this stage, it doesn't - the structure is not quite there. I think the program has gone on now for a number of years, the students are comfortable in the way that it runs. It now - the challenge will be if they do decide to make a change and to make the structure of that less about private study and more about focusing on learning outcomes that you want to achieve. To make that reportable on.

I think that we really need to - that probably would be the main challenge I think, would be then having to re-change the culture within the communities.

Facilitator: Anything else you'd like to say about the Learning Mentor program?

Interviewee: No, I think I've probably said plenty.

Facilitator: Thank you.

END OF TRANSCRIPT
Facilitator: Okay, this is Steve. Steve’s not in a leadership role at the college and he’s going to comment on the Learning Mentor program. So Steve, can you talk to me about the structure of the Learning Mentor program, the things that are good about it and things that are challenging at the moment?

Interviewee: Positives, you get - and I can only speak from my perspective, in my situation, in my LM, I’ve got a really good rapport and relationship with all my kids and their families. I have regular contact with them. There’s no issue - if there is an issue, I’m straight on the phone to them. It’s sort of like - yes, I feel like it’s like a little family there. Sure, there are some kids who were resistant to it at first but they’ve actually started to come round, particularly the seniors who’ve been in the program now for - this is their fifth year.

What’s another positive? I think just the relationship that you have with the parents too, because I’ve seen them up the street and it’s just like oh g’day Steve, how you going, g’day whoever, and that’s what I like. But I’ve always been like that. I like that relationship or that relational aspect of that.

What other positives? I’ll come back to positives, I think. The downside of the LM program is that I feel it’s rudderless at the moment and it has been for a while. There’s no big picture stuff. This Wednesday, even in the planning process which I have been involved in in the past, it’s oh, what are we going to do this week, what are we going to do that week? It shouldn’t be what are we going to do as a fill-in activity. You should have - and this is something that I’ve mentioned before - have a scope and sequence running over three years. So in year seven, like, seven do that, and then you move along, so it’s - I’m not expressing myself articulately enough. It’s too early in the morning.

It should be a rotational thing, where by the end of the six years of learning mentor we should have achieved something with the kids and aimed that at student outcomes. That’s what that should be aimed at rather than you know, we’ve got the Anzac Day ceremony here, well that’s that Wednesday done, that’s LM Wednesday done. We’ve got independent study, more independent study, and the kids do like that, but that’s just doing their homework. Like you go round, you assist the kids, and
that’s fine, that’s another positive that you can actually see where the kids are at and what work they’re doing and that, but I just feel like it’s rudderless at the moment yes. I don’t think a lot of people know, really, where we’re going with it, because I often think where are we going with it, because it’s not mapped out, there’s no road map for us to follow. It’s a bit of higgledy-piggedly, we do a bit of this, we haven’t done that for a while so we’ll throw a bit of SEL in there. We haven’t done this for a while, so we put that in. That’s how it’s mapped out. There’s no grand plan of - and that harks back to the introduction of the program, four and a half years ago where something as immense and a program as immense as the Learning Mentor program was not given the thought. It was rushed through and hence there was no - not a road map to start off with. We flew by the seat of our pants.

I remember spending a whole day over - when this was introduced, with the learning platform, which was disastrous and what consequentially a lot of people took that negative experience. That negative experience lasted for at least two years throughout the communities, that resistance to change and because, if this is what we’re doing - we weren’t part of - I didn’t feel as an individual staff member, I wasn’t part of the actual process of shaping this. It was thrust upon us, this is what we do.

Facilitator: So do you think, following on from that, that you had enough - there was enough training and in-servicing made available to staff?

Interviewee: No, and that’s what I was saying, that one day, basically, the learning platform, that was it. If you didn’t pick it up that day, and because the internet kept cutting in and out. I think from recollection it had to be abandoned in the afternoon because people just couldn’t access the internet. The guru who was supposed to come and explain all of this to us was late for two hours or one and a half hours. A staff member who really didn’t have their head around it then took over, so it was just a mess.

From that we had to implement this program that, as I said, there was ownership of a core group of people and we didn’t have that vision, or their vision of what they wanted to do. That was not - personally, I don’t think that was...

Facilitator: Thank you. In terms of the frequency of contact with the students, the actual structure of it, of the program, so they have short LM and then they have one long LM, is that an appropriate structure for the program from your perspective?

Interviewee: I think - well, it was touted that we were going to have two LM periods a week, which would be disastrous. I heard - the feedback from the floor, from the coalface, was that some people found it a struggle to fill one 72 minute period with LM activities and were petrified thinking, I’ve got to double up and do two of these a week. So personally, that works for me, I quite like the mornings and you get around and see the kids and have
a chat, what did you do on the weekend, et cetera et cetera, how are you going with your homework, all work up to date. That Wednesday, yes, that works for me. I think the majority of staff will probably - I don’t know. I think they’re now, after four and a half years of the program probably a lot more happy and a lot more settled in what we’re doing in that Wednesday period than they were to start off with, yes. So there’s been some growth there.

Facilitator: There has been growth, yes. I don’t want to sound negative about it, but that’s just my perspective, so I’ve been on both sides of the fence, so the bottom line is, it’s a Learning Mentor program. The learning, where’s that? Or are we just babysitting, sometimes Wednesdays with the independent study, that’s what it feels like. There’s not much, they’re doing individual learning, but what’s our role? I don’t think that’s being - we haven’t had the PD to explore what we should do as learning mentors. It’s okay to talk to the kids and build the relationships, that’s fine, but with that learning aspect, there’s no curriculum for the program that’s written down, it’s documented, and that harks back to the point I was making, we haven’t got a roadmap. Every year we’ll keep doing, regurgitating the same things. I had kids in my LM who say, not this again, not more goal-setting again, because they’re over it. It’s not like, okay, you do one aspect of goal-setting there in the first year and then in the second year you take it somewhere else, then the third year you do another element. So that’s what I’m saying, you build on, you don’t just repeat the same thing, because there’s no curriculum, there’s no curriculum to do that.

If I was a parent, walked in and said, show me your Learning Mentor curriculum, what actually are you teaching my kid, or whatever, we couldn’t produce a document. I don’t think we could produce a valid document to highlight that.

Facilitator: So for you, what are the best things about being a Learning Mentor?

Interviewee: Just getting to know the kids at a deeper level, and that doesn’t happen to all learning mentors. In roles that I’ve had in the school, I’ve walked past other LMs and they’re sitting there with their laptops and the kids are doing God knows what. They’re not mingling with the kids. But that’s me as a person, I like to get to know my kids. If I’m in the staff room and I hear someone bagging out a kid and I don’t know that kid and they’re obviously a discipline problem or a behavioural issue, when I’m on duty, I go out and see. I go and seek that kid out to see who he or she is, and then I’ll go up and have the conversation. G’day, mate, what’s your name? What’s your name, Floss, you know. What year are you in? No, I haven’t seen you around, or whatever. Then the next time I see them in the playground, I’ll say, g’day Bill, how are you? That’s where you build the relationship, so that when and if I ever teach them I don’t have a discipline problem with them,
so I’ve already established a relationship with them. Some people don’t want to do that, because that’s too hard. Why is it too hard? I don’t know. It’s just - anyway.

Facilitator: If you were to make any immediate changes to the program, what would they be?

Interviewee: I don’t know. I suppose for me it would be to spend - to rope the staff in and have a - we haven’t had a proper - really, a proper review where we split up as year levels and as core teachers or whatever, of subject areas. I think maybe we get together and start work - we spend, our staff meetings working on more input from the floor as to what we can do, because I don’t think that with staff meetings and that too, that’s a bit rushed. You don’t get the time, really, to - you sort of gloss over a few, gloss over that.

But yes, I think pull the staff back and to get this curriculum: what do we want to teach, what do we want our kids to walk out of Catholic College school gates at the end of year 12, what do we want them to look like? How are we going to get there and have that curriculum development where it’s the whole staff input, that’s the ownership. If you get ownership, then it’s yours and you’ll work damn hard to make sure it happens, because that’s your belief. You believe in it that strongly, you’re passionate about it.

Yes, so that’s probably what I’d do. I think we still need to go back and establish some sort of more concrete content curriculum, whatever you want to call it, and I don’t think we’ve got that. Not that it’s mandatory but at least it’s a stronger, more solid guideline in which to springboard off.

Facilitator: Any other points you’d like to make about the program?

Interviewee: No, not really. Personally, I’m really happy about the kids in my LM in my community, I think we’ve got a great community. Again the community, there are discrepancies with the six communities. We all have our own flavour, which is great, but some communities have worked harder at it than others and some have realised that they need to work hard in order to establish the relationships. Some communities included the ancillary staff in as their staff as well, everyone was inclusive where others didn’t do that and there was a negative vibe with some staff who would go up and say, you always do this or you obviously - we never do that.

So there’ve been discrepancies. I think now though after four and a half years, I think that’s settling down a bit more and people have realised the value of the relationship, not whether you’re the cleaner or whether you’re a secretary or ancillary staff or a grounds person. If you belong in a community, that’s your community. You’re not just in this community with a name on a piece of paper. You actually belong there, and in my own community which I can only speak from, from day one, it was inclusive and everyone had a vote and that’s how - we were democratic, we have always been democratic.
As the leader, it didn’t matter whether I wanted something, if I wanted something and didn’t get it, well that’s too bad, so sad, because we’ve all had that vote and that’s what the populace, that’s what the community wanted, so that’s what we went with. So yes. But some didn’t do that, so yes. That’s not my problem. Anyway, that’s about it really.

Facilitator: Thank you Steve. It’s important to note that Steve was in a leadership role prior to this year. Thank you.

INTERVIEW 4 (10010502/PFO)

FILE DETAILS
Audio Length: 14 minutes
Audio Quality: ☑ High ☐ Average ☐ Low
Number of Facilitators: One
Number of Interviewees: One
Difficult Interviewee Accents: ☐ Yes ☑ No
Other Comments:

START OF TRANSCRIPT

Facilitator: This is Paul. Paul is a current leader in the school. Paul, I'm just going to ask you to talk to me about the structure of the Learning Mentor Program. Do you think it has good organisation? Any other comments you would like to make about it?

Interviewee: So the structure of the Learning Mentor Program, I guess I look at Learning Community and Learning Mentor Groups. You've got your LCLs and then you have your Learning Mentors that look after their own Learning Mentor Group. That's about it for the organisational stuff, as in you've got two Learning Mentors per Learning Mentor Group.

Facilitator: Do you like that organisation?

Interviewee: I think it does work in regards to two teachers looking after 26 students or thereabouts. It gives you a chance to have a bit of one-on-one time with the students and get to know your students better, in that respect.

Facilitator: Do you think when you came into the Learning Mentor Program that you had enough training or inservicing to be a good Learning Mentor?

Interviewee: Initially I probably would say no, when I was new to the school in that role. As time went on it was more about realising and learning what the role of the Learning Mentor is, about getting to know your students, the way they learn, wellbeing and those sorts of things.

Facilitator: Do you have a good understanding of what a Learning Mentor is?
Interviewee: My understanding of a Learning Mentor is in regards to all the stuff I said before; the wellbeing of the student, knowing how the student learns best, their interests, getting to know the students one-on-one and working with them through their academic studies as well as their wellbeing issues so they feel comfortable coming to school. Knowing their interests, knowing them as a person rather than as a student.

Facilitator: Do you think the program has had an impact on the learning life of the students?

Interviewee: My personal belief is it has. It makes them feel more like a person rather than just a student and they’ve got someone that they can go and see about all sorts of things, whether it be about school or other issues that may affect their learning as well. Overall, yeah, it’s pretty good.

Facilitator: What are the best things about the Learning Mentor Program, from your perspective?

Interviewee: Having the Wednesday Learning Mentor period, that’s a good part of the program in regards it gives us time with the students. I find in the morning when you do the roll and the bulletins there’s not a lot of time there. I am concerned about the structure or the curriculum that’s put into the Learning Mentor Program. It needs to - definitely last year I found that the structure was a bit all over the place to be honest, but this year it seems to be a bit more structured with the LLLP folders, rights and responsibilities and about how we roll that out to the students. Things in the Learning Mentor Program that I think are good; the part where we went through all the bullying curriculum with the students. It allows us to talk to the students one-on-one or in small groups about that sort of stuff.

Facilitator: What do you think the current challenges of the program are? The actual curriculum?

Interviewee: The current challenge is the curriculum. It needs to be a structured curriculum without being too much. I found last year there was a lot of different curriculum tried to - almost felt like it was pushed into that program, so it didn't seem as structured. For a learning mentor program to work I believe it needs a curriculum but the amount of curriculum - there needs to be not a lot of curriculum. There needs to be a certain amount so we can actually get through the curriculum with the students and it needs to have purpose; purpose for the students and purpose for the teachers.

Facilitator: What are the best things about being a Learning Mentor, for you?

Interviewee: For me personally, the time that we do get to get to know the students as an individual and as a Learning Mentor Group. That to me is about growing with the students as they go through their academic or their school life and not just about their schooling but about their sporting events and all other stuff that they do. It allows us to get to know those students one-on-one.
Facilitator: What about any challenges you see being a Learning Mentor at the moment?

Interviewee: I think the challenge, from my point of view, is the time. If you know students one-on-one and there's wellbeing issues, there's just not enough time in the day, there really isn't. What happens, it starts to impact on your time that you need to prepare for your classes; ringing parents about wellbeing issues maybe or extra things like that or parents contacting you about concerns about how their kids are going in their subjects. Then it's a matter of contacting the subject teacher and finding out, which - is all good - all takes time.

I don't think there is enough time allocated to that. I'm not quite sure how you'd go about allocating the time fairly because each student has different needs. That's a big challenge, time.

Facilitator: Do you think that there are any benefits that have accrued for you personally as a result of participating in the program?

Interviewee: Personally for me, yeah, the program has been really good. It allows you to get to know the students personally about their studies. I think each day those students come to school they know that they're going to see their Learning Mentor, someone who knows about how they study, how they learn and all that sort of stuff. There's a lot of issues that can be sorted out really quickly because of that relationship.

Facilitator: If you were to make any changes to the Learning Mentor Program what would they be?

Interviewee: If I made changes to the Learning Mentor Program it would be more about having a curriculum that has an outline from the start of the year through to the end of the year, so as a Learning Mentor you know what's expected. Then you could have time to prepare that as well. Also, the change would be about having more time to enable you to be a Learning Mentor to the students. If you were aware of the curriculum and what was involved, that may save time as well.

Facilitator: Any other comments you would like to make?

Interviewee: No, that's about it. Just in general, the Learning Mentor Program I think is really good and the time is - probably more time is needed, but I think the students benefit greatly from the Learning Mentor Program.

Facilitator: Thank you, Paul.

END OF TRANSCRIPT
INTERVIEW 5 (10010503/TQU)

FILE DETAILS
Audio Length: 10 minutes
Audio Quality: High
Number of Facilitators: One
Number of Interviewees: One
Difficult Interviewee Accents: No

START OF TRANSCRIPT
Facilitator: This is Terry. Terry is currently not in a leadership role in the college. I'm going to talk to Terry about the structure of the Learning Mentor Program initially and then about his experiences within the program. So Terry, can you tell me about the organisation of the Learning Mentor Program? Do you like the way that it is organised in terms of its structure - the Learning Communities, the Learning Community Leaders, the number of periods we have weekly, et cetera?

Interviewee: At first I was a little bit unsure about the Learning Mentor Program but I've kind of grown into it and now that I know the students it's much easier. I find now that the students who have been with me from grade seven, we have formed a connection. It's the older ones that we moved back when the Learning Mentor Program first started, they're still a little bit - I haven't sort of formed the connection that you would like to have. The timing's fine. I think one period a week is fairly good. That's quite a…

Facilitator: One long period?
Interviewee: One long period, I find that's quite okay, yeah. You get a chance to walk around and talk to the students.

Facilitator: Terry, do you think that you had enough training or inservicing available to you before you came into the program?
Interviewee: No. I'd say, no. I didn't really know what was involved in the Learning Mentor Program. I'm not sure whether I didn't listen enough or whether I didn't follow up on information, but first start I found that for one lesson a week it was just a spare for the kids and they were just doing their own study and own work. A lot of the little kids were just playing games.

Facilitator: Do you think you have a strong understanding of what a Learning Mentor is, as a result of that?
Interviewee: I think now I do understand what's required of the Learning Mentors. Once again, for the students that started in year seven, I know the parents pretty well now because we probably communicate maybe four times a week with most parents. Sometimes you communicate more, mostly by email. Some of the parents will email you quite often. What I do now is, if a teacher sends me an email with a concern for a student I normally forward that on to the parents.
Facilitator: Do you think the program has had an impact on the learning life of the students - improved their skills in anyway, like their organisation skills or their communication skills?

Interviewee: No.

Facilitator: Not at all?

Interviewee: No, not at all.

Facilitator: What would you then say are the best things about the Learning Mentor Program?

Interviewee: The best thing would be definitely, being a large school, I find that the seventh and eighths, they like to - it's somebody who they know. You always seem to have the year 7s come up and talk to you at recess and lunchtime, on sports day, because they know who you are and they're quite happy to come along and talk to you. So in a large school it gives kids a chance to make a connection with an adult. Also, you've got a couple of kids who are very clingy, they like to be around adults. It gives them a chance to feel safe, I think.

Facilitator: What do you think the current challenges are for the program?

Interviewee: I don't know if there's any challenges. I think challenges will develop as you go along, so you can't really predict a challenge. The challenges will be, I think, the type of student that you have. So if you come across a disengaged student or difficult student, I think that will become a challenge. With the overall organisation of the program, at the moment I don't think there's really any challenges. Most people seem to know what's involved in it and they just go along with it.

Facilitator: What do you think are the best things to have happened for you being part of the program?

Interviewee: I guess it's given me a - I guess you learn more about the student. You learn about their family life, when they have troubles at home. You get to know the student a lot more, in and out of school. You get to know the parents and you kind of understand when kids come in with different moods, often you know what's happening at home. You understand more. So when the kid is away or is not happy or is struggling and stuff like that, normally there's a reason behind it.

Facilitator: What changes, if any, would you make to the Learning Mentor Program, if you could?

Interviewee: At this stage I wouldn't make any changes, I don't think. Probably the only thing I'd like is they map things out more clearly over a long period of time. Not so much now but, I think when it started they were doing things - they would work it out on the Tuesday and give it to you on the Wednesday. I think that the people who gave the information didn't follow through with it or weren't sure on how it was going to run.

Facilitator: Are you talking about the Learning Community Leaders?

Interviewee: I'm sort of talking in the past a bit. I think it happens fairly well now. I'd like to think that I'd have a term planner and I know what's happening each Wednesday and also that the activities that we give the students are engaging and worthwhile.
Facilitator: Are you thinking at the moment they're not as engaging or worthwhile as what they could be?
Interviewee: No. I think they're getting better. If you go back - remember three or four years ago we did a lot of those surveys on what type of learner are you? That was online. A lot of those, I thought they were just irrelevant. So they've got to make sure that when they do survey the kids that it's something that the kids see as worthwhile doing.
Facilitator: That's improving in the program at the moment?
Interviewee: That's improving, yeah. Some of the things we did - I just can't think off the top of my head - some of the things that we did do, the kids were quite happy to do it.
Facilitator: So are there any other comments you would like to make about the program?
Interviewee: Probably the only comment, I'd like to think that - sometimes I think it's still a private study class or a catch-up class. Often you'll come in and tell the kids, we're going to do this activity and they say, I've got to do work. So the older kids still see it as a time to do catch-up work or work that's due in that day. They get very, not aggressive - well some of them might get aggressive - but they see their work that needs to be handed in next lesson as more important than what we do in the Learning Mentor Program. So somewhere along the way - and I think it takes six years - Learning Mentor is a program, it is a class, it's not a private study class. I think as we go along that will change, or the kids' attitude towards it or the kids' understanding of it will change.
Facilitator: Thanks Terry.

END OF TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEW 6 (10010504/MRU)

FILE DETAILS

Audio Length: 20 minutes
Audio Quality: ☒ High ☐ Average ☐ Low
Number of Facilitators: One
Number of Interviewees: One
Difficult Interviewee Accents: ☐ Yes ☒ No
Other Comments:

START OF TRANSCRIPT

Facilitator: Okay, this is Michael, and Michael is not currently in a leadership role in the college, and I’m going to talk to him about the Learning Mentor program. So Michael, can you comment on the structure of the program in terms of how it’s organised, the frequency of contact with the students, or anything else you’d like to talk about structure?
Interviewee: Yes, so my understanding is that we were organising to six communities. Each community have a number of Learning Mentor teams that range from typically four year sevens, four year eights, so on and so forth up till year 12. Those groups meet every morning for eight minutes or so for daily admin notices and any kind of pastoral care that needs to go on with two teachers from the school who are in charge of those groups. Each community has a community leader, I guess, that the teachers of each Learning Mentor group kind of answer to.

Facilitator: Do you think that’s an effective structure?

Interviewee: In my limited experience of the Learning Mentor program, I’ve only been involved with it for two years, I think the way it’s structured, it seems to be okay. I don’t know whether there’s enough time in the morning for pastoral things and I think largely, my experience is for four days out of the five, of course, Wednesday morning we have the whole Learning Mentor period, so that’s 72 minutes where we get a Learning Mentor period, that’s probably time where we can deal with pastoral concerns. I find that the other four mornings of the week is largely admin: reading out daily notices, passing on any messages to students regarding the upcoming day, passing on notes for excursions or things like that, so it’s largely admin in the eight minutes in the morning.

Facilitator: Do you think you were prepared adequately to be a learning mentor, there was enough work before the Learning Mentor program that went into place so that you understood what a learning mentor was?

Interviewee: Administratively, yes. I think you don’t need much training to be able to hand out excursion notes and read daily bulletins. Pastorally, most high schools that I’ve been involved with have some type of home room, care room, home base, so that the name learning mentor was new to me, but the concept of someone being answerable for a student in terms of pastoral care wasn’t new to me. However no, I probably - there was no real PD training or specific training that I went through to be a learning mentor.

Facilitator: Do you think the Learning Mentor program has different aims to a home base?

Interviewee: I think so. My recollection of home bases and home rooms that I’ve been involved in was that it was largely admin stuff and contact with parents and it was probably a pastoral thing or a way the parents could have first contact with the school, is go through a home-base teacher. That teacher, probably there was no onus on them to have any real knowledge of student learning whereas I find the Learning Mentor program probably the suggestion is that you need to encapsulate both the learning and the pastoral side of the student.

Facilitator: Do you think that the program is having an impact on the learning life of the students, maybe organisational skills, teamwork, problem solving?
Interviewee: Certainly some students, yes, I think some students would take it in. I think some students, regardless of what environment you put them in, they’re going to - some students struggle to work in a team or refuse to do so in an environment that seems really manipulated to teach them how to work in a team. But what I mean by that is, you get a 15 and 16 year old and you do a session within learning mentor and what it means to work in a team, I think a lot of them will feel like why do I need to learn this.

So a lot of the time it feels really forced. In terms of learning though, I think certainly students feel like they know now that their learning mentor will be aware of any subjects that they’re failing in or that they’re struggling. There seems to be subject teachers now that if they’ve got an issue with the student then they approach the learning mentor to support them in the classroom. Students know that, I think that’s fairly explicit and made known to the students.

Facilitator: So what would you think are the best things about the learning mentor program?

Interviewee: I think from a student perspective they like this idea that there are one or two teachers in the school in particular that have a particular care for them and that care about their well being both in a learning environment and in a personal environment too and care about their well being. I think that is reassuring for some students and I really think that that idea is really valuable. I think it’s good that students are answerable to someone other than the classroom teacher, so if they are struggling or if they are doing really well, then it’s someone other than the classroom teacher who is giving praise or suggesting ways in which they might improve. I think that’s a really good part of the Learning Mentor program as well.

Facilitator: What do you think is its current challenges?

Interviewee: I think pastorally we need probably a bit more PD. Some teachers we know are excellent teachers of the content in a classroom but maybe not - aren’t as personable and maybe not interested in dealing with problems outside of curriculum, or maybe don’t feel like they’re equipped to deal with that. So in that way you probably get some disparity with some teachers really enjoy the Learning Mentor program and the pastoral side that accompanies it, and I know I certainly do, but I also see teachers in the school who probably don’t enjoy it so much.

Facilitator: So what would be the best things about being a learning mentor?

Interviewee: I enjoy seeing my group every morning. I feel like over the course of a number of years you begin to form a bond with students and begin to know their learning habits quite intimately and also their personal lives quite intimately. For me it’s really rewarding to see them grow over the years and to be able to take particular interest in a certain group of students. I really enjoy that.
Facilitator: Would you think that there are any challenges to you, personally, being a learning mentor?

Interviewee: I feel like I’m interested in students outside of my classroom and I really enjoy working with young adults and watching them grow, and I probably feel like I’m better equipped than some staff members in this school to deal with things that the Learning Mentor program might throw at you. Maybe a little bit more PD and a little bit more understanding of what exactly our role is would help, but look, I feel like I’ll be able to roll with any challenges that get thrown at me as a learning mentor.

Facilitator: If you could make any changes, what changes would you make?

Interviewee: It’s a tough one, because I mean you can always suggest changes to make the learning mentor idea better, but then I think sometimes that might come at the cost to another aspect of the school which would then need to go on and be improved. I think if there was any changes that I would make, it would be PD related, certainly make it clear what our role as learning mentors are. I would like to have more time just with the group. So I tend to find that Wednesday mornings in particular, which are set aside for learning mentor time, tends to become a dumping ground for other school events that happen. That sometimes means that particularly in first term you don’t get to have time with your learning mentor and talk to them about their learning and teaching because especially at the start of the year, there’s assemblies and there’s community assemblies and there’s sign up things. We basically don’t get the time to really start to get to know the students until towards the end of term two, and by then their year is well underway and any habits that they might have - that might need changing are pretty firmly entrenched.

Facilitator: Any other comments you’d like to make about the program?

Interviewee: No, I think that’s about all.

Facilitator: Thank you, Michael.

END OF TRANSCRIPT
Learning Mentor Program - anything about the structure, whether it's in terms of the six Learning Communities, the frequency of contact - any comment you'd like to make about that?

Interviewee: I think it is a really important program because we are in such a big community. So because there's 1100 students I think it's really important to have one key point of contact for each student and also for each family. I think that's the biggest thing for me that comes out of it and that we can be there to be really supportive of the students that are in our Learning Mentor Group. The community structure seems to work well. I think it generates a lot of community and enthusiasm throughout the school and throughout the different events and activities and things like that.

Facilitator: Do you think that as a Learning Mentor you were given enough training or inservicing before commencing in the role, so that you got an understanding of what a Learning Mentor is?

Interviewee: I probably would say, no. I probably would say that we just pick it up a lot as we go along. I probably would say that, if my true role was to be supporting the learning of the student then I would need a lot more support and professional learning around that. I don't know that that's been clearly defined for me, that that's actually what my role is. If my role is just to be there to be the main point of contact and to support the student, then I think I can do that without a lot of professional learning.

Facilitator: Do you think that the program has had an impact on the learning life of the students in terms of development of any skills - communication skills, organisational skills, perhaps improvement in their grades?

Interviewee: Only to the point that we discuss it and that we make them aware of it being important. I don't think we're necessarily shifting it for a student. I think it's good to be sitting down having conversations about how they're going in their different subjects, how they're feeling about them. Also, to be looking at things like their interim reports, their final reports and having a discussion about that, making that student a bit more accountable and finding out how much they're actually discussing the feedback that's coming through with their families.

Do I actually feel like I'm shifting the time management skills of one of my students? Probably not.

Do I actually feel like I'm shifting their organisational ability? Probably not.

Facilitator: For you, what are the best things about the Learning Mentor Program?

Interviewee: The support that I've had from my learning mentor partners, I think that was really beneficial as I came into the school and that's been a very supportive relationship. Working with the students is fantastic and I've built some really strong relationships with some of those students, particularly
when you have them from Year 7 right through. I'm in my fourth year here and I'm just noticing that a lot more. As you move into the program, if you can maintain that stability - I know that a lot of Learning Mentor Groups are chopping and changing all the time with the actual learning mentors but I've been very fortunate in that our group has stayed the same - you build some strong relationships with the students. I feel like they could come to me if they got into trouble or if there was anything that they needed support with, so the rapport is quite strong. I think that's been quite good work.

Just refresh me on what the question was again.

Facilitator: It was, the best things about the Learning Mentor Program?

Interviewee: The fun that we have and the sense of community - the birthday cakes, the getting together, celebrating certain achievements and that sort of thing - I think is really good.

Facilitator: What do you think are the current challenges in the program?

Interviewee: I think the biggest thing is defining it. There seems to be a lot of conversations happening around the school as to what the purpose of the program is, particularly with the update to our poll structure this year. I just completed the poll survey and fed a bit back into that. I said, I think it's really important that we're clear on exactly what the Learning Community Leader role is, what the Learning Mentor role is and what the role of the whole program is going forward, because I think we're moving into the consolidation phase of it. Obviously it was a huge shift. The first few years it's all about introducing the program, but now it's being really clear on what its role is, how it is tracking and whether or not it has achieved its aims. Hopefully our school leadership is really looking at that.

Facilitator: What are the best things about being a Learning Mentor?

Interviewee: The relationships with the students, definitely. All the things I have been talking about - the sense of community. I think it's really nice for them to always have that friendly face in the morning to greet them and start the day, to know that if they need anything they can come and get some support, particularly because it is such a big school. So for me, coming from a school of about 750 students - I thought that was huge - into a community of 1100 students, I think a lot of students can really fall through the cracks. Particularly with such big year levels as well, 200 students. There's a lot of students who... It blows me away too, the amount of wellbeing support that our students need. So I think it's really important to have a key point of contact and someone that's always looking out for them. If you didn't have that important contact in the morning the students could just float through and get really lost I imagine, some of them.

Facilitator: What changes would you make to the Learning Mentor Program, if any?
Interviewee: I'd probably just look at that period a week, would be the biggest thing, the period on a Wednesday morning - really be clear on what needs to happen there. Have it very structured, so at the start of the term everyone knows what is required and also all the students know what they're coming into each morning, whether or not they've got some flexibility to do a bit of study or whether there's actually a structured program. I don't think you want to throw material at them that doesn't mean anything or that's been covered already in some of their other classes, like around wellbeing and bullying and things like that.

So, being really clear about that and whether or not it is too much time as well. If it's not being used well and given that it gets absorbed so much by assemblies, signups for all the different events and functions, different liturgies and things like that - if that's the role of it then, that's perfect, but we need to know that so we're not constantly having a conversation about supporting the learning of our students because - if that's not happening in there, then …

Let's just be clear. If it is just about wellbeing and community, then I believe that it is achieving those aims well.

Facilitator: Any other comments you would like to make?

Interviewee: Just that I hope that research like this is actually looked at and really taken on board. I think it's really important to have such big programs evaluated well but then actually have someone looking at the results and the analysis and actually acting on it and doing something with it. I think that's my biggest comment, that it is really important for us to be looking at the success of a program but actually doing something about shifting it and improving it.

Facilitator: Thank you.
kind of arrangement, the frequency of contact, et cetera, with the program?

Interviewee: I feel it's - well, I guess having been through the restructuring from a home-based to a learning mentor program, I'm still confused about what the difference is, to be honest, between the old structure and the new structure. The only thing I can really say is different is that there are two communities more than home-based groups. Therefore it's a little bit smaller, but in terms of my role I feel it hasn't changed.

Facilitator: As a Learning Mentor, do you think that you had sufficient training or inservice made available to you before you commenced the role?

Interviewee: Probably not. I don't really think it was ever explained to staff what the actual difference would be. I think we were basically told that we would be the first point of call for a parent if there was an issue with learning or perhaps with welfare, as opposed to previously a year-level coordinator. That was what was probably reinforced to us and then slowly it has evolved into the fact that we are all things learning for them, even if we don't teach the kid.

I'm at a loss as to how I can be quite a good Learning Mentor if I don't understand the student's best way of learning and their capabilities - if they're not really in front of me in the classroom. I think it's the access to the student that worries me more than anything, or lack of.

Facilitator: Do you think the program therefore has had an impact on the learning life of the students? Has it improved teamwork or organisational skills?

Interviewee: No, I couldn't see how it could possibly have. There hasn't been any real programs implemented right through since the beginning to facilitate that, as far as I can see. For example, students with poor organisational skills haven't been identified and across the board inside our Learning Community certainly there's been nothing, as far as I know, to specifically target students. There's general stuff done of course, but no, not for the individual pathway that we credit ourselves for looking after - no, I can't see that.

Facilitator: What do you think are the best things about the Learning Mentor Program, if you were to identify them?

Interviewee: Hmm, goodness me. I guess I'm in the terrible position of just comparing it to the old system and I would - it's not my inability to move on, but I just think it's not as efficient as the old system because we don't know our kids if we don't teach in a junior school or middle school environment. We don't know them, so possibly we do not know what's happening in their lives. They present for 12 minutes in the morning, if that, when we do a roll and read a bulletin. Then if we do see them on a Wednesday for the 72 minutes, often that's taken by signing up for [ATHS] or for an assembly.
So, I'm not really sure how I can actually get so involved in the program to say it's better. I honestly can't. I think I knew my kids better when I was a home-based leader.

Facilitator: If you were to identify its current challenges, what would you say would be the challenges that the program is experiencing?

Interviewee: I think if we're supposed to be a learning mentor we need continual access to how the students are performing in all their subjects. For example, next week we'll have interviews so I will be able to grab a summary report off the internet, but I should have that information ongoing and fluid. I should be able to jump onto the database and see for example, [Saskia Star] in year 8, everything she has done in every subject. There should be ongoing reports, comments, whatever. It's just a surprise - it'll be a surprise to me when I peel off their reports, who's done what for this whole first six months really, for some students who I don't teach.

There'll be isolated individuals who will have got a Work Not Done form during the term. Obviously I will have photocopied it, kept a record and be aware of that, but there will be probably 80 per cent of the students who I'll not be aware of their ongoing performances, unless a parent has specifically rung. I don't think that culture's here at Catholic College yet, despite the program being in for a number of years.

Facilitator: So, you've identified the challenges. They would also be the challenges of being a Learning Mentor that you're experiencing?

Interviewee: Mm.

Facilitator: Have there been any benefits accrued to you personally from participating in the program?

Interviewee: I'm not sure what you mean by that.

Facilitator: Have you learnt anything for you - has something happened for you personally as a result of being in the program? Have you found a new skill or is there anything that you have got from it, from participating?

Interviewee: Not at this stage, no. I really can't think of anything. I think I've become better at collecting information and pieces of paper, thinking that might help me facilitate a student's learning. To be honest, most of my time in Learning Mentor is on welfare issues and getting kids into classrooms and making sure they're happy; it's not about their learning.

Facilitator: So if you were to make any changes, what sort of changes would you make?

Interviewee: I think we need - basically the philosophy is good and valid but we need the information and access to the information about our students all the time and ongoing. We need to be backed up by a better IT system to make it work.

Facilitator: Any other comments you would like to make about the program?

Interviewee: I'm at a loss as to why it was implemented so quickly with such great confidence. I just feel it really has been quite a disappointment. I really can't see the difference.
Facilitator: Thank you for that.

END OF TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEW 9 (10010601/LSY)

FILE DETAILS
Audio Length: 18 minutes
Audio Quality: ☒ High ☐ Average ☐ Low
Number of Facilitators: One
Number of Interviewees: One
Difficult Interviewee Accents: ☐ Yes ☒ No
Other Comments:

START OF TRANSCRIPT
Facilitator: So this is Louise. Louise is currently in a leadership role at the college. So Louise, I’m going to talk to you about the current structure of the Learning Mentor program and you can talk to any aspect of that in terms of the frequency of contact we have with our learning mentor groups, the structure itself, six houses, whatever you’d like to talk about in terms of structure.

Interviewee: Okay, thanks Anne. I guess I’ve been here over 20 years, so looking at the change of program, re Learning Mentor program, I think it’s been a great benefit. Been a big change going from four communities to six but I think it’s been beneficial to our school as far as size of the communities. The aims...

Facilitator: The smaller community you're talking about, yes.

Interviewee: Yes, so smaller numbers within those communities, so I guess it becomes a bit more personable. The aims of it, I think at times some have been clear and some haven't. We’ve sort of moved in and out of curriculum issues as well as wellbeing issues, working with students in those areas. So that’s still got to, I guess, stabilise a bit about what we actually run within our learning mentor groups. But the focus, I love being able to see my group of students every day and I love having that longer period once a week. I think that’s really important.

I also love the fact that I can follow through with these students, so I can have them when they come in at year 7 and have that relationship with them and continue through even though they may not be directly under me as a learning mentor, I still have that relationship with them for six years, which is fantastic.

Training and in-servicing, I don’t know whether we’ve had a lot of training and in-servicing to be a learning mentor, I think. My role is as a wellbeing leader role. So just talking with staff individually I think I’m fortunate, because I have that wellbeing relationship-type-personality in some ways with my students anyway, but not every staff member has that. Especially in a secondary school, teaching staff members quite often are very curriculum focused. I’m not saying they don’t have a
relationship with their students, but not necessarily what our school at present is expecting of our staff. I think it’s not something that is just natural to some people. So for example contacting parents re welfare of a student who might not be living at home and things like that is not a natural thing for some teachers to do that, or if there’s difficulties, parents have split up, things like that, it’s not always a natural thing for people to do that. So that can be very hard for some of our learning mentors, although I think they’re developing really well.

I like the fact that I have that contact with the parents and the families and that you have that ongoing - within your own community, I enjoy that, that you get to know families a lot more. I’ve had a few different partners over time since it’s been implemented, so I think I’ve had four different partners. My original person that I used to have when we had our old structure here, which was still a vertical structure, I was with for 17 years. So since then, I’ve had varying partners and some are more organised than others. Some are happy just to leave it. Some are non-teaching staff and they’ve been fantastic because they have a different relationship again with students.

I think at times, yes, some of the skills aren’t there for non-teaching staff re working with kids on curriculum and that. So that needs to maybe get a balance, especially if you have maybe a teaching partner that’s not as organised. That can be difficult for them, their partner, who is maybe is not teaching, just maybe an understanding sometimes of how schools run.

I think challenges at the moment, challenges will be that we’re consistent as learning mentors, that one learning mentor group doesn’t compare themselves with another about what’s going on those groups. I think there’s still a grave inconsistency with - how many learning mentors do we have?

Facilitator: Eighty four.

Interviewee: So if you look at 84 different personalities, not everybody works the same. They don’t have to, but within the learning mentor groups, if someone allows food for example with their learning mentor when they’re studying in the Wednesday session, and then others say no, you’re not allowed to have any food in here, there’s just inconsistency there. Their personalities come into it as far as who they like and who they don’t like, and I would hate to see that become a divisive thing.

Challenges of being a learning mentor, making sure you’re there every day and available to students. They can be a real challenge. Especially if you’re a wellbeing - or sorry, in a leadership position, sometimes you can get called away. So I’ve made that and I always have, made sure I go every single day. When I’m here I never miss it. I think I’d be devastated if I missed seeing the kids every day.

Benefits, I think relationship building, and that’s ongoing. So the students that I’ve had in my learning mentor [group] have

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wanted to keep in contact into university and the workplace and things like that. I’ve really enjoyed that, because that’s then helped my present students, because I’ve been able to put them in contact. I’ve sort of been the conduit for some students there which has been good, so it extends, I guess, the life of our school too, as far as outreach for community members, if that makes sense.

Changes, rooms can be hard I guess. That’s a physical thing of just location, we’re just short on location, so some rooms are better suited to a Learning Mentor program than others. For example, we’re in a science lab which is not really conducive at times to a quiet study area because it’s always noisy, but it’s great for if you’re going to do cooking there because you’ve got sinks and things to wash up in, so that’s - you’ve got to weigh it out.

I love the Learning Mentor program because I love the vertical aspect of it. I miss that there’s not - and this will always probably be a bit of a bugbear of mine, that there’s no horizontal grouping of our students. So for example we don’t have many things when all the 10s get together anymore, because they just aren’t drawn together as a year level much. So I think that’s probably the only element that I still think we need to tweak. We’ve lost that, I guess, one person drawing all year 10s together, or one person drawing all year 11s together.

Twelves is working well because they’re in the senior study area and I think they get drawn together a fair bit, but I think other year levels, probably more than 10s and 11s; seven, eight, nines seem to do a lot of horizontal things. I love it. I love having that relationship with the kids, I love being able to build on that relationship and hopefully assist them and learn from them at different times.

Facilitator: Can I just ask you about whether you think that the Learning Mentor program has had any impact on the learning life of students, like does it develop their communication skills, or improve their test scores, or...

Interviewee: I don’t think we have got a lot of factual information. So value adding is probably one of the things at this school that we don’t do. We introduce a lot of things. We try to evaluate things at different times and I know you’ve tried to evaluate a lot of things, but I think this school’s very good at introducing things but not evaluating its effectiveness. So as far as implementation, I don’t know exactly how far we go as test results, but I think the fact that I know with my students in my group I think it has improved.

Because you’re monitoring them on a regular basis, you get to find out what’s going on with those small group of students. If I’m vigilant, then I’m able to act on that and keep an eye on it. If I’m not quite in touch with it, then they can slip through the loophole a bit I think at the moment while it’s set up the way it is, because we’re still not made accountable. Learning mentors
are still not made accountable of how much information there is there, or how much communication is happening with home and that.

So I think until that happens in this new system that’s coming through, this synergy or record system, hopefully that’s going to make it even better as far as record-keeping and things like that, so everybody home, student and school, can see what’s happening with that student. I just hope the learning mentors don’t get lazy with it and just leave it up to the teaching staff, the academic teaching staff, because I think that’s probably a risk that could happen, but the learning mentor sees that while the parents know what’s going on with that subject, then they can deal with it. So I think the learning mentors need to play a good role, keeping an eye on it like that.

Facilitator: Fantastic. Thanks very much, Louise.
Interviewee: Thanks, Annie, for all your work.

END OF TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEW 10 (10010602/AMK)

FILE DETAILS
Audio Length: 25 minutes
Audio Quality: High
Number of Facilitators: One
Number of Interviewees: One
Difficult Interviewee Accents: Yes
Other Comments:

START OF TRANSCRIPT
Facilitator: So we have Andrew here. Andrew is currently in a non-leadership role and I’m going to ask him to comment on the structure of the Learning Mentor program and when I’m talking about structure, I’m talking about the six learning communities with six learning community leaders, whether the contact with the students is as frequent as it needs to be, or anything you want to talk about in terms of the structure of the program.

Interviewee: Straight away?
Facilitator: Yes.
Interviewee: So presently we have six community leaders, sorry, six communities, each led by a learning community leader. I see my students in the morning for 10 minutes for administrative purposes and then once a week for 70 minutes. So structurally the program works well in that we have a large school of 1100 and students now feel a very strong connection to a smaller community, being a learning community, so that component of the program which was to build community or a sense of belonging has worked quite well. Students identify with their
community strongly and not just necessarily on sports days, which was the case prior to that.

The 70 minute learning mentor period, is it adequate? Currently, it is well and truly adequate. In the current situation the course is light on content and if an increase in the learning mentor time was to be allocated there would have to be a substantial increase in the rigour and depth of the program as it stands. So currently speaking, I would suggest the program is irrelevant, to a large part, to the student’s academic career, is disconnected from many other aspects of the school, and many other aspects of the school seem to run counter to the LM program. So instead of being embedded as part of the heart, which I think is the potential of the program, there’s been a bit of a missed opportunity to make it part and parcel of our school community, and that goes because of the structure, but also we have other strong structures within the school that are very strong and very efficient and because they are efficient they probably take something away from the LM program.

Facilitator: Do you think you had sufficient training in servicing made available to you before you started in the role?

Interviewee: No, although I have a background in student management and pastoral care, so that made it a lot easier, but I don’t think - I’m still unsure what the role of a learning mentor/teacher adviser is. I guess I do know from my own research, from what I’ve seen in other schools, but I don’t think that has come from the PD offered here. So I would suggest a lot of staff are still unsure about what their role actually is. The learning - when my learning mentor role was sold as a mentor of learning, and the danger was always going to be that the learning mentor becomes simply the pastoral care coordinator of that child and that is as much about reacting to the immediacy of situations and that’s part of the role, certainly and I think many staffs do that well, but I think the role is broader than that, but many staff don’t see it as that. The mentoring of learning is a very specialised and quite taxing role, I suppose, and I’m not sure whether many mentors have fully embraced that side of the program.

Facilitator: So in terms of its impact on the learning life of students, improvement in grades, test scores...

Interviewee: I can’t imagine how - I can’t imagine that - my opinion is that it’s had very little impact. I think the students see it as irrelevant to their studies and that’s because it’s a big disconnect between what happens in the classroom and what happens in learning mentor. There is very little overlap between those two areas. The students see it, the staff certainly see it, and so it’s not seen as, in my opinion, many students don’t see it as being a valuable part.

If a student needs assistance, they will naturally go to the people they think that can provide the assistance. If that’s a classroom teacher, or a year level leader, year seven or eight, or the senior school leader, students will do that and I think we see that
happening. I’m not sure how many students go to a learning community leader, or their learning mentor for issues related to learning, to academic. Again, I think the positions have become a pastoral care role, and that is not something that’s not part of it - that is intrinsically part of both those roles, but that’s where it stops at the moment.

I don’t think we’re seeing a really strong connection between the students learning and what happens in LM and I’m not sure, you know, I can think the program is probably not as tight as it could be and there were missed opportunities to make connections with what the kids do in LM with what they’re doing in the classroom, because there certainly is a need for it, as a year level coordinator, a pastoral year level coordinator, there was a crying need for those skills that fall between the cracks in a secondary school: skills on how to learn, how to access information, how to study it, those generic terms and generic skills are sometimes lost in a secondary school because of the disjointed aspects of some of the curriculum. The learning mentor was a terrific opportunity to fill those cracks while not adding more work to the students or to teachers, but just to enhance the work that we’re already doing, and I think we missed that a little bit.

Facilitator: So what do you think are the best things about the program?
Interviewee: I think the vertical nature of it is challenging but I actually - I like that. I think the vertical nature of it, allowing staff to move with students across several year levels and allowing staff a broader experience than perhaps in a one year level, I think it’s good for students to mix with other year levels, sorry, students from other year levels, so I think the vertical nature.

There are certainly challenges and in some cases those challenges need to be - they can’t be overcome. So there is probably a need to be a bit more flexible in that there are some opportunities for horizontal learning even within the Learning Mentor program, but I think the vertical nature is one of its strengths. And I suppose the other strength is the community building that’s occurred. So the LCLs I think have done a very good job in building their community over many years and building that spirit and that sense of ownership to that community. I think that wasn’t going to happen in our old house system because of ingrained practices and the ideas that staff have had. By changing the whole structure from the start of this program has allowed that building up for that community and I think that the LCLs in both past and present have done a very good job in building those communities.

Facilitator: So you identified one challenge there earlier. Are there other challenges about the Learning Mental program that need to be addressed?
Interviewee: I think at the moment, I’ve mentioned before the relevancy of it. I think that is a bit - one of the biggest challenges, both amongst staff and students. I don’t feel that staff have much ownership of
the program at the moment and that’s because the activities we do and the structural activities we do are often given to staff holus bolus, here’s step one, step two, step three and staff don’t necessarily find that engaging for themselves, let alone their students. The content is sometimes a bit lacking in rigour. We’re trying to present to kids who may be 18 through to kids who are 12 and 13 and that presents its own difficulties, so that’s a challenge.

I also think there’s a challenge in the school at the moment where we have other strong structures that are running at the same time that don’t fit into the learning community structure, so the senior school and the seven and eight and nine leaders, the PL, the personal learning activities are a good example of that, where students are receiving - or potentially could be receiving the same types of stuff, this material that they’re receiving in the learning mentor, so there’s a double up.

I think the students probably find that personal learning a bit more relevant because it’s targeted and it’s targeted to their year and it’s targeted to what they’re doing in the classroom. The LM has to find more relevancy in the student’s life.

Facilitator: What would be the best things about being a learning mentor?
Interviewee: Relationships with families are the big one, because making contact with families at the moment is easy, because I’ve built up that relationship with the family over many years. Even difficult families, it is much easier to make contact with and it’s much easier to have difficult conversations with them because we’ve built that up. So that would be, I think, the best part of the LM and the relationship of the kids to it, allowing that sense of relationship to develop over a couple of years has always been a positive.

Facilitator: The negatives of that, or the challenges of being a mentor?
Interviewee: Time is a huge commitment and if I do my job properly, I need to devote a huge amount, a substantial amount of time to those students who need it and just as a matter of luck, I had three or four very high need students in my LM and I devoted a lot of time to assisting them and their family to liaison between the family and the teachers and doing those things I think that the program is meant to, is aiming towards, but dedicating that much time on a full-time teaching load is problematic and very challenging and emotionally draining.

Facilitator: Do you think there’s any benefits that have accrued for you personally as a result of participating in the program?
Interviewee: Personally, other than being able to develop those relationships with families, I’m not sure whether that’s a personal. But certainly in my professional life, and I’ve enjoyed it, but I don’t think I’ve developed any special skills and I don’t think I have any greater knowledge of any particular area than before I started.

Facilitator: Any changes you think you’d like to make to the program?
Interviewee: I’d like to see more horizontal activities within our house that are targeted to specific learning tasks that are happening in the classroom at the moment, so that would involve LCLs liaison much more closely with year-level leaders to determine what’s happening in classrooms at the moment, what skills are lacking and how the learning community leader role can then, using existing work tasks to develop those skills, and I’m talking research, homework, organisation, preparing for tests, things that perhaps are not explicitly taught in a classroom.

Facilitator: Any other comments you’d like to make about the program?

Interviewee: I think the program has great potential. I’m not sure whether we’re setting it at our school at this moment.

Facilitator: Thanks Andrew.

END OF TRANSCRIPT